A CAMPAIGNER AT HOME.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF 'NUGÆ CRITICÆ.'

LONDON
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE

A CAMPAIGNER AT HOME.

BY SHIRLEY.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS, & GREEN.
1865.

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TO JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, ESQUIRE,

THE HISTORIAN OF THE ENGLISH REFOR-

MATION, THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED, BY

HIS ATTACHED FRIEND, THE AUTHOR.

THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY.

THERE is a surprising monotony in the way of the world. This generation goeth; another cometh; and the old story is constantly repeated. One could fancy that the Immortals who watch the play must begin to find it tedious. 'I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun.' Titiens and Adelina Patti are charming singers; but to hear *Il Trovatore* or *Don Giovanni* night after night must try the patience of the most musical saints. You, being a cynic, unhappily, are tempted to enquire why the manager does not see fit to vary the performances occasionally. Even a French Revolution has lost its zest by this time. A rising in Poland is like a novel where the end is visible

from the beginning. We know by heart all Lord Palmerston's jokes. Not for the first time have Austrian and Prussian brigands plundered and murdered their innocent fellow-creatures. There is only one mature human soul, I believe, which is insensible to the tedium of the play. Let us honour Earl Russell, that is—Lord John, that was. He is the oasis in our desert. He was threescore and ten years of age the other day, I have heard, and yet he writes longer and more tumultuous letters than any miss in her teens. I wonder if he *crosses* his despatches: it would save a deal of stationery to the nation if he did. One can understand, however (assuming this to be the case), why his male correspondents—waspish creatures, like Bismarck and Gortschakoff—swear so awfully when they see his handwriting. But no experience disenchants him. He is never *blasé*. The Test and Corporation Act is not a very seductive mistress, one fancies; yet he clasps the wrinkled hag to his

heart with the fervour of earliest passion. What 'seed of day,' we may reasonably ask with the poet Vaughan, has been imprisoned in this valiant diminutive form? Who taught him to crow with such heroic unwearied vigilance? One does not see, indeed, how Earl Russell will occupy himself in glory. He cannot well introduce a Reform Bill into heaven. Yet if any of the archangels presume on their position, it is possible enough that even there we may hear a good deal about close boroughs.

Putting Lord John aside, therefore, one can understand why people have begun to conclude that it is safer and wiser, upon the whole, to leave the hard nuts of speculation—'fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute'—to be cracked elsewhere. 'Jim,' a friend of mine observed the other day, addressing an incorrigibly careless groom, 'Jim, do you *ever* think?' 'As little as possible, Sir,' was the quiet rejoinder. There was

common-sense and philosophic insight in the reply. If he once began to think, there was no saying where he might stop. Divine philosophy is a slippery jade,—a veritable Will-o'-the-wisp,—teasing, cheating, mocking, worrying those whom she deludes into her service. We beat our wings against the bars of our cage, and only ruffle our feathers.

Yet it is pleasant sometimes to toy leisurely with thought as you lie in the sunshine. To listen to the rustle of fancies in your head as you listen to the rustle of the leaves. It is pure indolence, no doubt; but then indolence is always becoming, and this indolence is of a very rich, luxurious, and highly ornamented description, like the jug there which belonged to Louis Quatorze. I think the habit grows on us as we grow old. Youth is fiery, and restless, and speculative; but the simpler tastes of age are gratified by simpler pleasures. It is likely enough, I dare say, that we shall take

the habit with us to the grave. If there be any thought at all under the sod, it will be pursued in this listless and idle fashion. You will have at best a dim perception only of what is going on in the upper world. You will lie with your eyes closed, and your hands clasped upon your breast, and dream of the violets overhead in the sunshine, and of the Violet who lies below at your side. I do not want to be laid in consecrated mould. The Bishop of St. Mungo would not like his dust to mingle with the unbeliever's, and is thankful that the middle wall of partition has not been removed from the churchyard. I am pleased that he is pleased. *De gustibus*, you know, my Lord; but men who have not been anointed may rest content with simpler solemnities. Put me in, if you like, under the great old oak in the Chase, which has grown in the same spot since the Heptarchy, whose multitudinous leaves and acorns drop autumn after autumn with a soft rustle to the grass, where the rabbit skips undisturbed in

the moonlight. The green turf is already sprinkled with daisies, and the mavis sings her *requiem.* The footsore gipsy will untie his wallet beside the brook which whimples near, and eat his noonday crust beneath the cooling shade. I do not believe that he will disturb my rest, unbelieving beggar though he be; and the spot and its gentle companionship well become the idle mood that we call death.

Whether, however, it be lawful to trifle in print is a matter that may be discussed till Doomsday. Yet when a man is occupied with other than literary work, he must either trifle, or lay down the pen altogether. It is impossible that the professional man can produce a work of real value or sustained interest in his brief and widely-divided intervals of leisure. When he returns from the law court or his office in the city, he cannot resume, without an effort, the interrupted thread of his discourse. The mood has changed.

The passion has cooled. Like some inveterate jesters, he has forgotten the point of the joke. Yet the man who has once seen his name in print is as difficult to cure as the man who is addicted to intemperance. He can never quite separate himself from the companions of his gipsyhood. So in his holiday-time he lifts the pen which he had laid aside, and trifles with art, and poetry, and letters, and politics. Grave men are entitled to complain of the desultory and unexhaustive treatment of serious subjects; but, fortunately for the wearer of motley, the public is less exacting. If he do not meddle with the money-market, he may 'babble o' green fields' to his heart's content. And this is my apology for a 'Book of Trifles.'

S.

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A CAMPAIGNER AT HOME.

I.

LABURNUM LODGE.

ROSE'S cottage was nearly as sweet and dainty as its mistress.

> Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
> Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
> News from the humming city comes to it
> In sound of funeral or of marriage bells:
> And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
> The windy clanging of the Minster clock;
> Although between it and the garden lies
> A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
> That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
> Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
> Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
> Crown'd with the Minster towers.

Now, that is precisely the sort of place which suits me. I am not a recluse. I could never live alone on the top of a column, except in a posthumous way, worked

in bronze or marble. I don't like solitude—at least all the year round I should prefer the solitude of a crowd to the solitude of the desert. My faculties are apt to get rusty when they are left to air in the fields too long. The earliest days of a country life are very well; but after a bit the first wonderful green fades out of the leaves; the noises of the woodland are no more noticed than the noise in the Strand; the thrush loses its voice; the sun rises later and later every day, so that it is often mid-day before we sit down to breakfast. I know that there are many men whose minds are keener and more elastic; with whom familiarity does not breed contempt; whose exquisitely delicate appreciation is never blunted; to whose eyes Nature never ceases to disclose her earliest virginal bloom. A man like Charles St. John could live all his days in a marsh or on a sandbank, and never feel that the hours had leaden feet. The architecture of a common sparrow's nest was as wonderful in his eyes as the architecture of St. Peter's; and the print which a passing wild bird had left upon the sand opened as wide a field of conjecture and inquiry as the footprint in 'Robinson Crusoe.' Weary of the country indeed! Were there not the ever-changing seasons—winter, spring, summer, autumn? Could he not watch the birth of the wild flowers, and the yellowing of the leaf? Did not all sorts of creatures lay strangely pictured and gorgeously-adorned eggs, from grubs and caterpillars up to ospreys and golden eagles? Could he not listen to the call of the partridge, or of the lap-

wing, or of the corn-crake o' June nights, to the beat of the mallard's or the widgeon's wings when the October twilight was falling, to the trumpet call of the hooper when the land was white with snow, and the chaste moon high in the silent heaven? But then the naturalist's sense, like the poet's, must be born with him; no amount of education will enable you to see if Nature has not given you eyes; and that fine faculty of observation which St. John, and White of Selborne, and Izaak Walton, and a few of our minor earlier poets seem to have had, is a gift—very admirable, but very rare; and none the less admirable or rare because the common people (I do not mean the lower classes, but people who are not uncommon) will insist on believing that it is neither the one nor the other. The life which these men live is, I think, a beautiful life—pure, pious, and happy; it is the nearest approach that remains to the ideal Arcadian life; for it is calm, without being stagnant; active and manly, and yet not simply physical; and tender, without being vulgar or gross, like the tenderness of real shepherds and shepherdesses. But then to be able to live this rustic saintly life, it is needful not only to have been born with some of the faculties of the saints, but to have dwelt apart from the congregation of sinners. As for myself, I have mixed in the great game. The poison is in my veins. The habits of birds are very well in their way; but, after all, 'the proper study of mankind is man.' I must be able to meet and mix with human beings when I choose; to feel the stir and

throng of the crowd; to keep within sight of the council-hall and the market-place. In this way only can a weak and sinful mortal preserve, undefiled and undimmed, his devotion to the moon, and the stars, and the running brooks, and the purple moorland, and the windy bents. I fancy sometimes that nature was intended to serve chiefly as a background. In the front we have the fights of heroes; behind us rise the passes of Thermopylæ, and the hills that hem in Marathon.

O nostra mente cupida e superba!

But though sorrowfully aware that the simple monastic life of the pure lover of nature is beyond my reach, I would not willingly set up my tent in the dusty high road. I do not like the 'town cross' either of a village or of a city. It is not good for us to see overmuch of our fellow-creatures. 'A fellow-creature, indeed; why a bug might as well call you its bedfellow.' The pithy and sinewy contempt which Cobbett could express in such sterling English was learned, I supposed, at the plough. People who live in villages, in fact, always quarrel. I don't wonder that they do. They see so much of each other, and so little of the rest of the world. They are continually running against their neighbour in the street, and tramping on their neighbour's corns. I have thus a great horror of villages. The necessity of nodding to, or 'Good-day'-ing, every second man you meet, keeps you in a state of incessant irritation. The tyranny of small and familiar things is the worst of tyrannies;

and it becomes insufferable when you are jammed into a corner, where every living being, from the parish constable to the apothecary, knows you by head-mark.

You will understand by this time why it is that I care to dwell neither in the country nor in the town. And happier than mortals commonly are in the accomplishment of their desires, I have found a sort of nook that is neither the one thing nor the other —like a mermaid, or a centaur, or the faun of Praxiteles and Mr. Hawthorne, or Her Majesty's present Administration, excepting always my Lord Palmerston, who, they tell me, is a pure Tory, and has nothing of the hybrid in him. Such a nook have I found, and, grateful to Heaven, who has anchored me in a quiet harbour at last, I christen it, 'Rest and be thankful.' This was how I found it :—

I have been knocking about the world in a casual and incidental way for the last thirty or forty years. I have made acquaintance with all sorts of things and people—Choctaws, Yankee editors, gorillas, and other miscellaneous members of the human family. I believe that I have visited the seven wonders of the world, though I am not sure that I could enumerate them at the present moment. I have been at the bottom of the great Geyser, and at the top of St. Peter's. I was blessed by the Pope, and narrowly escaped being eaten among the Fans by their Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have ridden along the Chinese wall—the wilderness on one hand, the oldest and strangest civilisation of the world on the other. I

passed through India at the time of the mutiny, and beheld the matchless faith and heroic valour of a handful of Englishmen, hemmed in on all hands by fierce barbarians, recover the splendid bauble which a handful of Englishmen had carelessly picked up. I knew the great Arab sheiks; I had conversed with Queen Astarte about the Asian mystery, and Tancred's maiden-speech in the Lords; I had wandered across the Steppes with the mighty Tartar hordes, and tasted of the patriarchal life. My choleric friend, Sir Sampson Legend, had been, no doubt, in some respects more adventurous than myself. 'I know the length of the Emperor of China's foot; I have kissed the great Mogul's slippers, and rid a-hunting upon an elephant with the Cham of Tartary. Body o' me, I have made a cuckold of a king, and the present Majesty of Bantam is the issue of these loins.' Yet I dare say that, during the last eighteen or nineteen years, owing of course to the increased facilities for locomotion, I have traversed as great a portion of the earth's surface as the Wandering Jew succeeded in traversing during as many centuries.

The nomadic is indeed a noble life. Yet as you grow old, you begin to fancy that it is about time to bring your wanderings to a close. Travel-stained and travel-sore, you are fain to return to Ithaca, if the gods only will give their consent. Not that Ithaca is fairer or better than other lands; not so indeed; it is only a bleak scrap of rock, where the goats feed, and round which the sea-mews wheel. But, then, O adorable

Calypso, Ithaca is Home, and the patient wife and the mild Telemachus await our return.

So one day I went home. The grey and weather-beaten farm-house, where so many generations of our name had lived simple lives, and died easy deaths, among their flocks and herds, still stood upon the bents beside the sea. Yet something ailed the place. *They* had all left, it is true; but for that I was prepared. I knew that they had been carried one by one through the standing corn, or across the new-ploughed furrows, to a quiet little churchyard, which stands quite by itself upon the moorland, and which is seldom disturbed, except when a large-eyed owl flits through the tombstones in the moonlight, or a rustic procession, clad in decent, if somewhat threadbare black, and bringing with them, shoulder-high, a fir coffin, rudely sawn and nailed together by the village carpenter, wends down to it through the heather. Thirty years is a large space in the life of perishing men; but I had not expected to find the whole records of a generation so completely blotted out. Except the 'I. L.' which I had carved for little Isabel upon the willow which dips its branches into the burn, there was no trace of the busy life which I had left behind me. The new people had many arrows in their quiver, and a houseful of children were playing in the mud before the kitchen-door, with the ducklings and goslings, as I approached. Poor little souls! they seemed happy enough, I thought; though it is a mystery to me how children continue to preserve their gaiety now-a-days. Don't you know, my dears,

that thirty, or forty, or fifty years ago, we, too, were playing in the mud; we, too, were sailing our bits of ships in the mill-dam; we, too, were as happy as ducks in the rain, and as dirty as the day was long? And you see what it has all come to already: most of us lying quite still up yonder on the hill-side below the heather; only one tough, asthmatic campaigner, who is apt to shiver in the very brightest sunshine, and who is often as cross, and sulky, and unsociable as a grisly bear unexpectedly wakened out of his winter nap, being left ungathered. Nay, do not let us begin to preach. Only I found very quickly that though the old farm-house still stands, the home of forty years ago had not now any local habitation in this world. So I turned my face away. I could not remain in a dwelling which even the ghosts had ceased to haunt. It was a place to make a pilgrimage to at times (when one's memory had become less exacting), but not to live in; to die in, perhaps; but I had plenty of life in me yet. There is always one member of a family whom Death seems to forget, and who might go on living for ever, if he liked, and had a taste for Nonconformity.

Her Majesty's mail in these parts, and in these days, consisted of a very old gig, drawn by a much older horse, and driven by, I suppose, the very oldest coachman in the world—at least, he had driven the mail in the days of my boyhood, and he was still driving it when I returned in my old age. When I had taken my place beside him (there was only room for one passenger beside the driver), I confess I felt more at home than I

had felt at any time since my return to my native district. The old fellow was pleasant and chatty, and had a sort of agricultural obituary, which was not without interest to one who retained a vague recollection of the names which formed the landmarks of his memory. *Auld Drumwhalloch had deed the winter after the drought; Kilcuddy was aye girnin' about the price o' oats, and gaed out as the grub cam in; Pittendreech was never like himsel after the* '45, *or it micht be the* '46—*na, it was the* '45—*the year the neaps gaed wrang, and Sandy Pirie took a nineteen years' lease o' the Lews.* So the old fellow rambled on, stage after stage, until, late at night, we entered a considerable city, and the old horse came to a dead stop in front of 'The Royal George,' whose brightly-lighted windows gleamed pleasantly and hospitably through the darkness.

Hazeldean, I found, was rather a nice town in its way. It had broad streets, substantially-built dwelling-houses, good shops, a policeman at any corner where he was not wanted, a dozen churches, a town-house, a civic magistracy, and a Lord Provost; and the Lord Provost of Hazeldean was within the municipality quite as great a man as the Lord Mayor of London. I do not know that all these solid attractions would have secured my affections. I think not. But as I pursued my researches, under the guidance of mine host of the 'George' (he did not accompany me in person, for, to tell the truth, he seldom moves out of his bar; but we had a chat in the morning before I started), I came at last upon a retired and far-away suburb, lying among

green trees and murmuring brooks, whose delicate and modest charm I could not resist. It was a case of love at first sight; and love at first sight is the only love in which I believe. That is to say, if a woman does not win your regard during the first day you meet, she will scarcely win it afterwards. She must in that case be so obnoxious that the more you know her the less you like her. But if she be pretty and witty, with a sweet temper and a low voice, you are sure to lose your heart within twenty or thirty minutes of your meeting. Mind, I do not say that you marry her: marriage is a matter of opportunity: but if you live in the country with her for a week, and get her after lunch to drive you down in her pony-carriage to see the geese on the pond, the chances are about a hundred to one that you do. Some marriages may be made in heaven, but a great many more are made in country houses.

The dwellings in this suburb are of a quaint, old-fashioned, and cunning architecture. The outside walls are covered with ivy and China roses, and the roofs are white with lichens, which the heaviest thunder shower never entirely washes off. Where they got their chimneys I cannot say; but such a collection of Dutch tops was never seen anywhere else. Every house must have had a builder of its own; and each builder has allowed his fancy to run at random into the wildest and most grotesque freaks. The consequence is, that what between the green things that cling to the walls and that hide the roofs, and the serpent-like undulations, the unpremeditated twists and contortions, in which the

chimneys indulge, it is often difficult to discover whether this mass of foliage be a dwelling built by human hands, or a piece of nature's architecture, a curious vegetable growth which the sun and the damp between them have contrived to rear. Nor are they built upon any intelligible pattern. There is no attempt at method. They maintain no fixed relation to each other. One is put down in the middle of an orchard. Another is put down at the roadside. There are no walls nor railings between them; only thick hedges of holly and hawthorn, which, at the time when I first beheld them, were fragrant with blossom. The high-road skirted the suburb, but failed to penetrate it; and its place was supplied by a labyrinth of shady lanes, which rambled round the dwellings in the idlest way imaginable, and broke out every now and then into little rustic bridges, when they came across any of the miniature streams which quietly trickled over the pure white pebbles, and bore away the yellow leaves as they fell one by one through the summer day upon the water. Shady the lanes are, even in the bare winter-time; but there is an atmosphere of shade everywhere, not the shade of hedges or of orchards only, but of noble forest trees.

Through this delightful land I had wandered for half a June day. There was a breathless silence upon the face of the earth—not a living creature stirred. And so I sauntered slowly on through the lanes, plucking now a wild flower from the roots of the hedges, now a branch of white hawthorn or of orange laburnum, now bending over the side of a wooden bridge to watch the

clear gliding water, now catching a glimpse of bright sunshine and blue sky through the branches of the great forest trees. But at last, in one of the stillest nooks of this choice wilderness, I came suddenly upon an open window—the house jutted quite out to the lane, and ran parallel with the hedge—a window raised slightly above the level of the roadway, round which the ivy clustered, and hung in green festoons. Enclosed in this rustic frame I beheld a face—one of those faces which once seen are never forgotten:—a profile very pale, perfectly motionless, so motionless that it might ages ago have been cut in marble; the dark heavy eyelashes studiously lowered upon the book which lay—I fancied—on the lap, and contrasting with the exquisitely delicate life of the complexion; the wavy brown hair, twisted loosely back from the temples, and coiled into a purple and golden net; a glimpse of girlhood such as mighty Venetian artists have painted—mute, pensive, adorable.

'The sleeping princess!' I murmured to myself; but I dared not break the spell with spoken words. She did not notice me.

Then leaning back the small shapely head, she raised her eyes to the tops of the forest trees, where a streak of blue heaven, or it might be a glory of angels, was discernible through the summer leaves, and smiled to herself in a dreamy unconscious mood. The eyes were of the sad hazel sort—hazel, I think; but in looking at such a face my chemistry is at fault, and I am seldom able to discover of what colour the eyes are made. Yet

the face was full of ardent life; there were mystical depths in the eyes, but they were shrewd and vigorous, and disclosed a daring nature—an impression which the dreamy, delicate curve of the upper lip did not disturb; for, though finely cut, it had more than the composure of a man's. There was a will in that lip which, once roused, neither man nor woman could bend. But now, as she turned her face, you did not think of that. You thought only of the light which those wonderful eyes seemed to shed among the shadows—the sunshine in the shady place which they brought.

I passed on; but this face decided me. I had found the resting-place that I coveted. The town was near by, and yet I was in the midst of the forest. I could mix with men, while listening to the murmur of the brooks and the whisper of the woodland. And then this gracious face might sometimes shed a glory of light about me. Not, indeed, that she could ever be brought to welcome, with more than a child's welcome, the stiff soldier who had spent his youth in the wars, and whose season for love was gone. No such flattering imagination did I ever harbour in my most secret thoughts. But I might lie on the grass and watch the flight of the white-bosomed doves, and listen to their tender cooings in the cool deep places of the woods. She would find a mate to whose breast she could nestle; and it would be enough for me to know that the eyes had never been wet with other tears than those which are shed when we are happy, or when we love.

By a lucky chance I discovered that the adjacent house—which stood some two hundred yards away—wanted a tenant. The one was Laburnum Cottage, the other Laburnum Lodge. So I bought and paid for the Lodge. It had belonged to an old East Indian colonel, who ate his last currie during the snow-storm in the spring. I took it just as he left it. Had I judged of him from his surroundings, I might have fancied that he continued to adhere to the last to some of the rankest forms of idolatry. Little Indian idols, with fierce fixed eyes, rolled about on the mantelpiece. An African fetish hung from the drawing-room ceiling. Angular Chinese, in tails and curious perspective, paid their devotions to Confucius. Grotesque devils, with their mouths full of red fire, served as inkstands or as letter weights. It seemed as if the colonel had had a mania for bringing together all the superstitions which the sun looks down upon. In the centre of Christendom, within sight (figuratively speaking) of the office of the *Record*, I found a houseful of pagan idols. But being a man of peace, I did not disturb them, and they don't seem to disagree among themselves. So we get on very well together: only I sent the fetish (who had been attacked by the moths) away to the green-house, where he spends a secluded but not undignified immortality.

So you see me anchored at last; the spires of Hazeldean dimly visible through a break in the hedge, the forest trees dropping their leaves upon me as I quietly meditate on the life which now is and that which is

to come, or saunter through the garden with Letty Diamond, or her father, the Doctor, or her uncle, the Commodore, or her little sister Sissy. We live in the middle of an orchard, and the boundary that separates the Cottage from the Lodge is ill-defined and ill-observed. Letty is rather shy; but Sissy took me into her confidence from the first. She had shown me all her pets and all her plans within a week of my coming —her picture-books, and her Shetland pony, and her Skye terrier, and her speaking parrot, and the auriculas in her garden, and '*that* swan's nest among the reeds.'* The little maiden was as idle as the day was long; and she was delighted to find another vagabond as idly inclined as herself. So she waits for me among the flower-beds outside till I have finished breakfast, conversing gravely with Donald, my sole retainer, upon the management of dogs, and horses, and pigs, and flowers, and poultry—and then she puts her hand in mine, and we march off to survey our territories. Of little Sissy, of Letty and Letty's lovers, of our neighbours in the woodland, and of our neighbours in the city, I may perhaps one day have something more to tell you. In the meantime, however, the autumn light begins to fail, and I must lay my pen aside. But I see

* Little Ellie in her smile
Chooseth—'I will have a lover
Riding on a steed of steeds!
He shall love me without guile;
And to *him* I will discover
That swan's nest among the reeds!'

Mrs Browning

a great wood-fire blazing in the Cottage drawing-room, and shining cheerfully into the *gloaming;* and I know that Sissy—a miraculous little witch now, in white frock and red sash—is waiting for a romp before dinner.

II.

HOW WE ELECTED THE BEADLE.

MY good friend, Dr. Dionysius Diamond, is a reproduction of Addison's humorist—

> For all thy humours, whether grave or mellow,
> Thou'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow,
> Hast so much wit, and mirth, and spleen about thee,
> There is no living with thee, nor without thee.

What more can one say? There you have the whole man sketched by the easy hand of a master—who probably, however, only gave local colouring, English habitation, to the stronger lines of an earlier moralist. That Dr. Diamond's heart was as sound as his digestion, that his wits were as keen and bright as his grey eyes, that he had a hot temper, a liberal sympathy for whatever was honest and of good repute, a liberal and manly detestation of meanness and baseness and narrowness in every shape, social and ecclesiastical, which they could assume, every man and woman in Hazeldean was well aware. The Doctor, when I came to know him, had in a measure retired from professional work; but he was always busy—I might say,

always in a bustle. No one would have harmed a hair of his head; but he had a quaint sort of notion that the world was full of assailants, and life a constant battle-ground. He was ever on the watch for lurking enemies and pretended friends. He had his loins girded and his lamp burning; and I am certain that he kept one or both eyes open while he slept. There was no repose in his life, no quiet pastoral nook, no wayside inn, where he could lie down at his ease, and listen dreamily as the shepherd boy—'piping as though he would never grow old'—went by with his fleecy flocks. He would have worried an Oriental to death. And perhaps, considering what his nature was, he could not well help turning the world into a bed of thorns. To the man who entertains a vigorous contempt for the little dishonesties, the pitiful shifts, which make up so large a part of our life; who cannot possess his soul in patience, but is driven into scornful retort and sharp and aggressive speech; it is seldom at least a bed of roses. And so the Doctor found it; but he throve upon contention; had he had it all his own way, *tedium vitæ* would have finished him in a week; he was never more cheerful than when a nestful of hornets was buzzing about his ears, when all manner of theological and political fanatics, into whose nests, reason or no reason, he would thrust his stick, were roused, and angry, and menacing. The little Doctor was perfectly fearless—the combined howling of all the wild beasts in the wilderness did not disturb him one whit. He would have lauded President Davis to a Yankee mob; he

would have addressed a flock of famished wolves (tearing after his sledge) on the advantages of a vegetarian diet; and he would have spoken neatly, with a dash of epigram, and to the point.

Now, it has so happened that for the last two or three months the Doctor has been in a state—even for him—of almost morbid activity. We had—to begin with—a Congress. I suppose you know what a congress is. This was a congress, not of crowned heads, but of eating and drinking, of coated and petticoated, philosophers. Everybody who had nothing else to do, everybody who had a crotchet about anything that wanted airing, and who could not manage otherwise to get it brought into public view, invaded our retired and peaceful society. They were a motley mob; but they called themselves the Association for the Suppression of Social Nuisances. Jean Paul suggested to an author anxiously revising the list of errata, that it might perhaps be advisable to put the whole book into his list; but we were too polite to suggest to our visitors that the first step in their crusade was to suppress themselves. Probably the Secretary (who, I suppose, like other secretaries, gets his four or five hundred a year) might be able to explain what the object of the association is; but our worthy citizens, who were not aware how heavily time hangs upon idle hands, and how the world runs off to Scotland, and Switzerland, and Homburg, and Brighton, and Exeter Hall, and the Opera, and Mr. Spurgeon, and Dr. Cumming, and Miss Braddon's novels, to get quit of it,

were mightily puzzled. However, like good Samaritans, they fed them, and clothed them, and took them in; and it must be owned that the Social Evils (to be brief) took very kindly to their feeding. 'In all labour there is profit,' says the preacher; 'but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.' After they had had it all out about four of the afternoon, their stomachs must have been as empty as their heads, and of course they eat like crocodiles. What it was all about, the Secretary, as I have said, may perhaps be able to tell you; but there seemed to be no subject, human or divine, which might not be regarded in the light of a social nuisance. There were people who wanted to shut up the country turnpikes on the first, and the public-houses on every day of the week; people who thought that the Bible could not be taught apart from vulgar fractions and the Latin grammar; others who were convinced that tobacco was the root of all evil, and who looked forward to putting your pipe out by Act of Parliament; others who detected in theatrical performances a device of the devil, and who would have sent Miss Herbert in her dainty livery (O formosa puer!), or Mr. Wigan to the 'Tolbooth,' without scruple. These gentlemen were more or less practical in their views; they were all for damning the sins they had no mind to by a liberal application of the police-magistrate and the parish stocks; but one department was devoted to those questions of a purely speculative character which are largely discussed in asylums for the insane. Here the talking was im-

mense, and the excitement prodigious; and here the petticoats most did congregate. I am sorry to say that the philosophers occasionally lost temper, and the important question, Had woman been made in the image of man, what would have been the consequence? was discussed amid a general scrimmage. I instinctively retreated towards the door, as I regarded that crowd of angry men, and the flashing eyes of learned women, upon whose pale faces the *lumen juventae purpureum* shed a rather wan light, and who, if they had not been made exactly after the male pattern, were (barring the breeches) uncommonly like it. I cannot repeat what the philosophers said of each other; had they been theologians they could not have used more forcible language; that employed long ago by mediæval doctors and schoolmen, looks weak and washy in comparison.

Doctor Serafino:

May the Lord have mercy on your position,
You wretched, wrangling, culler of herbs!

Doctor Cherubino:

May he send your soul to eternal perdition
For your Treatise on the Irregular Verbs!

However, a smooth answer turns away wrath: the storm gradually abated: and when I left them, musing, it may be, somewhat pensively in the words of Hudibras—

For what, alas! is it to us
Whether in the moon men thus and thus
Do eat their porridge, cut their corns,
Or whether they have tails or horns?

—a number of nautically-disposed individuals were proceeding to consider, in a spirit becoming the subject, some such dilemmas as these:—What will be the value of a steamer at Matamoras at the close of the American war? What will be the value of the *Ironsides* after it is blown up? Where do you expect to go when you get into the Galway Packet? The excitement of the scientific mind was, perhaps, not unnatural; as long as chance enters into human affairs, the law of general averages (that's what it is called, I think) must remain incompletely developed: but is it not the aim of science to drive chance, or fate, or destiny, or providence, or whatever you choose to designate the disturbing and spiritual element, out of the world, and to bring the resurrection and the judgment-seat within reach of arithmetic?

The Doctor, during the sitting of the Congress, was as busy as the day was long. Besides reading a paper to the historical section on the sanitary shortcomings of Hazeldean, he had to look after the members who enjoyed the hospitality of the Cottage—a gentleman who was strong on common sewers, and another who leant in theory to the Maine Liquor Law (but who took his tumbler after dinner very kindly), being among his guests. But as soon as the association closed (having fairly talked itself out) the Doctor was again plunged into the waters of controversy. This was how it happened.

When I first came to Hazeldean, the Doctor determined to elevate me to the dignity of a Municipal Coun-

cillor. 'There is a vacancy at present, and we'll put you in. It's a duty that an idle man owes to society, and, besides, you'll see some queer characters.' I remonstrated: I had never opened my mouth to an English public: but it was of no avail. The imperious little man removed all difficulties; got me elected for a quiet ward where the notion that it was a councillor's duty to abolish taxes in general (or, at least, to get other people to pay them) was not so prevalent as it seemed to be elsewhere; and I took my seat and assumed my gown, and the golden insignia of office, with becoming gravity. At the first meeting which I attended, the subject under discussion was, whether an additional six-and-eightpence or thereby should be given to the college beadle. They sat six mortal hours, abused each other like pickpockets, and then, on the motion of a corpulent bailie, adjourned the discussion till the following month, on the understanding that the subject should be then finally disposed of. So the unlucky beadle did not get his increase of salary for another month at least—did not get it at all, as it afterwards turned out.

For fate was stronger than the council. The gods had determined that the beadle should never enjoy that increased salary for which his soul had yearned. He died, in fact. I do not know that he was starved: probably not. It was a wretched pittance, no doubt, that he got; but then many generations of beadles had contrived to exist, and grow fat and fair, or rather purple, upon it. However, he died, and the place that he occu-

pied, and the salary that he enjoyed, or hoped to enjoy, waited for another. Nor did it wait long. Scarcely, indeed, was the breath out of poor old Bumble's body before an army of hungry applicants began to besiege the council, in whom the patronage was vested. This was the new sea of strife on which the Doctor had embarked.

The storm burst, as I say, before the breath was well out of the old beadle's body. Every day, for several weeks, one or more bulky pamphlets in dingy wrappers were laid on the breakfast table with the morning papers and letters. These were the 'testimonials' of the candidates. Each of the cardinal virtues, it appeared, was desirous to occupy the post which Bumble had vacated. There was a positive glut of perfections. Never before were such intellectual acquirements, such spiritual experiences, such moral graces, at the disposal of a town council. It was clear, let them elect whom they would, that the man would be infinitely too good for the place—infinitely too good, indeed, for almost any place in an imperfect world. How had such excellence been hidden away so long—unappreciated and unrequited? My faith in the ultimate perfectibility of human nature (which had suffered many rude shocks during the preceding thirty or forty years) was confirmed and fortified. Here was a post worth, say 50*l.* per annum with perquisites, and all the saints in the calendar (and more) were willing, nay, eagerly anxious, to undertake its duties.

It would be an endless labour to review these publi-

cations separately. Nor is it necessary; for in point of fact there ran through them a strong family likeness. It is difficult to cultivate originality in a testimonial, and these were all constructed on the same pattern. Some of them, indeed, were vaguer than the rest. On behalf of one gentleman, the bench of bishops lifted up their voices. The Bishop of Sardis had heard that the Archbishop of Philadelphia had heard that the candidate was a very superior person. The Bishop of Thyatira agreed with the Bishop of Sardis. The Bishop of Laodicea was not personally acquainted with the candidate, but he had no doubt that he was well qualified for the office (whatever it was), and heartily wished him success. Generally speaking, the testimony of the episcopal bench amounted to this, that in so far as they were aware, the applicant had never committed, or, at least (which came to the same thing), had never been convicted of any grave offence. From the neutral tint of the bishops the descent to more direct and robust eulogy was gradual. The dean was cordial; the vicar, unguarded, enthusiastic, and (when he warned the electors that they had a duty to discharge) slightly defiant. The foreign testimonials (written in the dead languages) were, perhaps, the most impressive. The municipal representatives, from the Lord Provost downwards, were rather rusty in their classics, and they not unnaturally believed—not being aware that Teutonic scholars and lettered Scotchmen habitually use the tongues of antiquity—that a man who could deliberately sit down and write a page of Greek in favour of his

friend must be very much in earnest. I believe that the election nearly turned on a testimonial from a Dutch professor, in which he remarked that a strong sense of duty moved him to declare that his friend Jones in the beadle's chair would be the right man in the right place.

There was another aspect in which similarity was preserved. Only a few of the testimonials in each case had been obtained for the occasion. The candidates had had a large stock on hand. Perhaps they were none the worse for being aired now and then; they would have been apt to grow mouldy otherwise. It was curious to observe the different channels into which the same man's ambition had been directed from time to time. At one period he had thought of becoming a professor of Hebrew; at another he had an eye on the customs or the excise; then he was anxious to assist Mr. Panizzi in looking after the British Museum; then he was ready to do a little astronomy or a little natural history for the nation. And now a selection from all these old documents was forwarded to us to show how eminently qualified the applicant was to become our beadle. Some men might be disposed to laugh at the association; for my own part I did not laugh. There was, to my mind, something rather sorrowful in these evidences of repeated and continuous failure. Lots of men, anxious to do journeyman's work, yet unable to find any work,—left unemployed to devour their hearts, and a pittance that scarce kept body and soul together, at their leisure. And it was painful to notice how the hopefulness which marked the earlier applications gra-

dually departed and vanished. The lad fresh from college would have applied for the premiership had it been vacant and open to competition. As it was, he had no doubt that he could look after a college or a colony, and was quite prepared to become Principal of St. Mary's or Governor of the Bahamas. Then—when his first application failed—he came down a step. A snug professorship, or a comfortable little thing in Downing Street or at the Treasury, would suit him exactly. And thus the descent had continued; thus hope after hope had been extinguished; until a hungry, half-starved, half-witted, middle-aged, threadbare creature is eager for Bumble's empty shoes. My poor friends! what you might have been fit for once, and what you are fit for now, God knows; but I fear that even Bumble himself was not more acrid than the new beadle is likely to prove should we put one of your long-suffering fraternity into his place.

From this vein of pitiful reverie the Doctor rudely awoke me. I defy any man to be sentimental for ten minutes in his company. He disturbs romance as an uproarious blue-bottle fly disturbs the silence of a forsaken church—like Torcello.

'Jones seems eligible,' I remarked, alluding to the episcopal candidate, with his ninety-and-nine testimonials.

'Jones! why Jones is an undischarged bankrupt, who will probably be tried for fraudulently putting away his effects.'

'Robinson?' I asked in a whisper.

'Not such a bad fellow by any means—only he drinks like a fish. He had a bad fit of delirium tremens last Sunday fortnight. I don't believe that he is ever quite sober, except for a few hours about the middle of the week.'

'Then for whom are *we* to vote, Doctor?'

'Brown is our man,' was the authoritative reply. And the Doctor thereupon undertook to prove that Brown was the only qualified candidate. Brown was a sober and industrious citizen, who had stayed all his days in his native town; who had contrived to keep a wife and rear uncountable children on £40 a year; who was known by headmark and old repute to every one of the electors. But Brown's testimonials, unhappily, were not impressive. He was not one of those whom the episcopal bench delighted to honour. There was not a single bishop, not even a Dutch professor, to certify to his fitness. He had merely asked half-a-dozen of the men with whom he had worked for the past five-and-twenty years to say what they thought of his character, and they had only said, simply and plainly, and as briefly as possible, that they held him to be an honest, industrious, well-conducted, God-fearing man.

I don't know that Brown had ever much chance. The Doctor, however, was so energetic, so imperious, so absolute, when he once took a cause to heart, that I rather think he might have carried his man. But just at the moment when things were looking brightest, a dire rumour was industriously circulated, how or by

whom we failed to discover. *Brown was unsound.* From that moment his chance was gone; our horse was scored out of the list of possible winners.

I have never been much of a theologian, and I cannot say that I ever exactly understood in what respects Brown had gone astray. You will find the details in *Christian Charity*, or *The British Bug.* He was a Socinian, or an Arian, or an Armenian, or a Pelagian, or something a shade or two worse, but I don't recollect what they called it. It could not be said, indeed, from the accounts furnished by his critics, that there was much consistency in his creed. At one time, like Lord Palmerston, he had held peculiar views about original sin; at another, loose notions about baptism: of late years his opinions upon final perseverance had grown very unsettled.

The Doctor was furious. 'Oh you generation of reptiles!' he exclaimed, 'you unvarnished and untarnished humbugs! Suppose he has views about final perseverance, won't he make just as good a beadle? Why can't you let the man believe what he likes? We are not making him a doctor of theology. But the whole story is false: Brown is sound in wind and limb, in life and doctrine.'

He struggled gallantly, but he struggled in vain. The religious world was roused. We had had latitudinarian bishops, archdeacons who were shaky about the eucharist, deans and canons of unorthodox repute, but heresy hitherto had not infected the beadles. So there was really a large principle at stake. As Dan

put it to me the other morning—If the beadles go, what becomes of the Protestant Establishment? Dan is a son of old Widow Partington (Sydney Smith's friend), and he assured me solemnly that, in the event of Brown's election, not a boy of his should thereafter be permitted to pass the college gates. 'Secular learning was very well in its place; but what are the perishing interests of time,' said Dan, who has contrived, however, to feather his own temporary nest very snugly, 'to their eternal well-being?' Then the press took it up. Brown's private history was ransacked. He was turned inside out. The *Hazeldean Midge* (the High Church organ) buzzed about his ears. The *Hazeldean Knout* (Evangelical) smote him hip and thigh. The *Hazeldean Bug* (which bites on its own account) abuses 'provincialism' (especially the provincialism of thinking no evil of your neighbour); and if you happen to write a book, tells its readers, by way of criticism, what was said at your dinner-table last week, and how your butcher's bill has not been settled. The *Bug* inquired, generally, who was Brown's grandmother,—wanted to know in particular if the Brown, who was hanged for sheep-stealing about the beginning of the century, was any connection of the family?

The day big with the fate of the beadle arrived. We—the Doctor and I—went down to the council to propose our man *pro formâ*; but we knew that defeat awaited us. The corpulent bailie (who was attached to the Burghers) proposed, and a lean councillor (a

leader of the Antiburghers) seconded—for there had been a coalition against 'Antichrist,' as they called poor Brown—the bishop's candidate. They said little about their man, and not a word against his rivals; but Councillor Sawnie, who nominated Jones, was less reticent. 'The people of Knox and of Geddes had a duty to discharge. They were the last resting-place of the truth. The sword of the Lord and of Gideon had been committed to their keeping.' (The Doctor could not help expressing his surprise at the assistance provided by the Almighty.) Sawnie was not indeed prepared to say that Brown was an unbeliever; but when he looked abroad—and then Sawnie proceeded with no inconsiderable skill in that eulogy of depreciation, which is more fatal than direct invective, to demolish our unfortunate friend.

Treasurer Yellowfin having seconded Sawnie, the Doctor rose to propose Brown. He is never a fluent speaker, and he was now too angry to say much; but he got out a few sharp words, to the effect that he thought they should have the candidates in, and put them through their paces. A competitive examination of the beadles in theology would be entertaining, and might promote the conviviality of the council. He advised Sawnie to keep his eyes open. That learned councillor might employ a tailor, who confounded the persons and divided the substance; or a barber, who had shaved the new Dean of Westminster; or a devil, who didn't believe in future punishments. That would be a direct encouragement of damnable error; and if

Sawnie encouraged damnable error, where did he expect his immortal soul to go?

Brown was of course nowhere. There was a close run between Jones and Robinson; but the authority of the episcopate prevailed. 'There's one comfort,' said the Doctor to me, as we left, 'the next fit of del. trem. *must* carry him off. By that time we'll have a reformed council.'

Such is the history of our election. It is the history of elections more important than that of beadle. There are many bad features about it: on some of them it is needless to dwell; the *odium theologicum* will never abate while there are 'holy idiots' (to borrow a phrase from Marlowe) in the world; but it is abundantly clear that the whole system of 'testimonials' is rotten, and requires to be revised. It is, in the first place, a grievous tax upon those who testify. I should fancy that one-third of the time of a popular Oxford professor or of an eminent public writer is occupied in composing testimonials. Were the work done honestly, this would involve a vast amount of mental labour; for severe and accurate criticism of men requires brain-work of the best kind; but the work is *not* done honestly. It is impossible for a friend, even for an acquaintance, to refuse you a certificate, if you have the assurance to ask him for one; and it is scarcely to be expected that on such occasions he should speak the plain truth. How could he? How could he tell you to your face that you were an arrant impostor, who knew as much about conic sections as about the moon,

and never got quite up to the mark till after your fifth tumbler? The phraseology of the testimonial has thus become highly conventional. It has as little life in it as a Queen's Speech. It is as dismal as a prize poem. Then the system is degrading as well as dishonest. Were it not that it has been in use among us for so long, no man who valued his self-respect could possibly resort to it. For consider what it involves. The moment that an office is vacant the intending candidate despatches begging letters all over the country. 'Mr. Brown presents his compliments to Professor Zumpterzeid, and requests Mr. Zumpterzeid to certify that he is eminently qualified for the Chair of Sanscrit.' The answers are printed as they arrive, are bound together, and the candidate modestly introduces himself and his pretensions to the electors. 'Here I am, and here are my testimonials. They may not be so numerous as those which the proprietors of Morison's pills or Holloway's ointment or the Revelenta Arabica, or the starch used in the Royal Laundry, have obtained; but I flatter myself that, on reading them, you will find that you are in the presence of a very remarkable man. Here is a certificate signed by the venerable Lord Aldborough, who declares that after fifty years of constant agony—pardon me—*that* is Professor Holloway—but Professor Zumpterzeid, you see—'

Now is it decent to oblige scholars and gentlemen to pass through such an ordeal? Testimonials, by their very nature, are the provender of quacks, and the diet

is one that honest men ought not to be required to fatten upon. I dare say that great satirist — that greatest of satirists—Swift, meant to ridicule this system (as well as Bentley) in what is after all the finest, if the slightest, of his pleasantries. It is thus that Isaak Bickerstaff vindicates himself 'against what is objected to him by Mr. Partridge, in his Almanack for the present year 1709 :'—

'I wish Mr. Partridge knew the thoughts which foreign universities have conceived of his ungenerous proceedings with me; but I am too tender of his reputation to publish them to the world. That spirit of envy and pride which blasts so many rising geniuses in our nation is yet unknown among professors abroad. The necessity of justifying myself will excuse my vanity when I tell the reader that I have near a hundred honorary letters from several parts of Europe (some as far as Muscovy) in praise of my performance; besides several others, which, as I have been credibly informed, were opened in the post-office, and never sent me. If I had leave to print the Latin letters transmitted to me from foreign parts, they would fill a volume, and be a full defence against all that Mr. Partridge or his accomplices of the Portugal inquisition will be ever able to object; who, by the way, are the only enemies my predictions have ever met with at home or abroad. But I hope I know better what is due to the honour of a learned correspondence in so tender a point. Yet some of these illustrious persons will, perhaps, excuse me for transcribing a passage or

two in my vindication. The most learned Monsieur Leibnitz thus addresses to me his third letter—*Illustrissimo Bickerstaffo astrologiae instauratori*, &c. Monsieur le Clerc, quoting my predictions in a treatise he published last year, is pleased to say—*Ita nupperime Bickerstaffius magnum illud Angliae sidus.* Another great professor, writing of me, has these words—*Bickerstaffius, nobilis Anglus, astrologorum hujusce saeculi facile princeps.* Signor Magliabecchi, the great Duke's famous library keeper, spends almost his whole letter in compliments and praise. It is true the renowned professor of astronomy at Utrecht seems to differ from me in one article, but it is after the modest manner that becomes a philosopher ; as, *pace tanti viri dixerim ;* and page 55 he seems to lay the error on the printer (as, indeed, it ought), and says—*Vel forsan error typographi, cum alioquin Bickerstaffius vir doctissimus*, &c.'

Here, therefore, in the enjoyment of his office leave we the beadle. I am sure that, after the worry of the last three weeks, it is my fervent prayer that the fatal attack which the Doctor anticipates may be postponed till I have quitted the council.

III.

MEMORIAL POETRY.—THE DOCTOR'S ESSAY.

'THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day.' I suppose that Gray was thinking of summer when he wrote the line; and the summer twilight, with its lowing herds, its drowsy tinklings, its smell of sweet clover and winnowed hay and the milking-pail, is a very pleasant season. But I have a particular attachment to the parting hour when the trees are leafless, and the fields are white with snow,—the twilight of the dying year. At what other season do you see such a fire in the west? do you return from the cover with such a keen glow of enjoyment? does your cigar burn so brightly? does your pulse beat so steadily? That walk home from the Ardlaw Hill, when the frosty daylight is failing, when Donald grows confidential about the smuggling forays in which he has borne part, when the Commodore spins a yarn about South Sea Islanders, and the trade in African gold and niggers, is one for which I have a keen relish.

The guns are discharged outside the 'Muckle Planting,' to the great edification of sundry rabbits, who are

scampering in the moonlight. This is our curfew bell. The Doctor descends from his study, Letty sees that her tea-tray is in readiness, Sissy is violently combed and curried, and scrambles into her new white frock. By the time the sportsmen appear, the fire is blazing lustily in the Cottage drawing-room, and Letty is 'making tea.' The afternoon cup of tea, a nice apology for a charming half-hour's chat, was a happy thought. At the Cottage they adopted the reformed doctrines at an early period, —their neighbour at the Lodge being always welcome. The Doctor brings the morning papers with him from his study, and comments upon the news of the day,— how a battle, where thirty thousand men were killed and wounded, has been fought at some place in America, whose obscure or plebeian name is destined henceforth to become heroic; how the Germans are drinking the health of the fatherland in a confused, passionate manner; how the Danes are gathering quietly along the northern frontier; how the Thames has been frozen over; how Lord Palmerston has been out with the harriers. On other days the new novel—in the religious-sensation line—is in requisition, and the Doctor reads for our edification (and he reads well) the crowning chapter, wherein the hero, on discovering that he has married his grandmother, is taken in hand by Dr. Cumming, and makes an exemplary end as a district-visitor. Or it may be the new poem, Jean Ingelow's grand pathetic ballad on the high tide in Lincolnshire, or a lyric by Miss Rossetti, or Mr. Woolner's *My Beautiful Lady*. Or it may be an essay from that Book

of Essays, De Omnibus Rebus et quibusdam aliis, on which rumour declares the Doctor to be at present engaged. The Commodore listens gravely,—a very simple, uncorrupted man is the Commodore, yet with a poetic instinct in his heart, which silent night-watches under African skies and among Indian seas may have tended to quicken into keener life. Sissy rolls herself up in a cashmere shawl, with one of the terriers and a white kitten, at Letty's feet. Letty, as usual, is superbly arranged. Whatever she does is done with a pure natural grace, not without a touch of daring, which makes the manner of doing distinctive and peculiar. She has rummaged out of some obscure closet the old-fashioned spinning-wheel which belonged to her grandmother and her great-grandmother, and has had it set up and brought into use. Letty at the spinning-wheel—her delicate little foot in its gold-beaded slipper resting upon the foot-board, as she daintily arranges the threads over which her shapely head is bent—is a picture which unites the glory of the Italian with the quaintness of the Dutch. One of Titian's blue-eyed, golden-haired Madonnas in Flemish masquerade! But it is one of the prettiest of masquerades—as young Horace Lovelace, the parson's son, very clearly appears to think, when he occasionally joins our tea-party—and therefore I do not wonder that many great artists have delighted to represent their heroines employed at the spindle, from Helen of Lacedæmon to Sylvia of Haytersbank.

A simple society, pleased with simple pleasures!

But to-day—this Christmas-day—a shadow has fallen upon our happiness. We are sad because a great man has been taken from us suddenly—because 'that good white head, which all men knew,' has been laid low. When our old postman, Sandy, brought me my letters this forenoon he said to me, 'Ye'll have heard, sir, that Mr. Thackeray is gaen.' Sandy is a bit of a scholar; he is, moreover, a High Churchman and a High Tory; not unfamiliar with the literature in which the distinction between the king *de jure* and the king *de facto* is drawn with such quaint precision; not unfamiliar with the controversies about transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and the like. Yet even Sandy, sublimely elevated above popular excitement, as a postman and antiquary should be, was affected when he told us that the great man was dead.

Some of us had known him well, and had loved—as who could help loving?—that noble simple gentleman. I recalled the last time I had seen him, a year or two previously, when I found him sitting in his den at the top of his house in Onslow Square. Even then he had suffered much and long, and the traces of suffering were visible in his face. I think that even in his brightest moods it was possible to detect these traces, sometimes in the eyes, more frequently about the grave curves of the mouth. Of course I was ushered into his den—of course he told me how much, and from what, he was suffering. This perfect unreserve, this almost childish openness of nature, was characteristic of Thackeray. He was willing that his whole life should be laid bare,

and looked through. He seemed to say, 'There is my life—if there are any blemishes in it, make the most of them.' The clear transparent simplicity of the boy at the Charterhouse never deserted him. In fact, he often reminded one of a boy. On this very day of which I am speaking he wore an old shooting-coat much too short for him: it sat upon the giant as a boy's jacket would fit an ordinary mortal. And then the contrast would strike one. This mighty, vehement, white-headed boy had written the simplest, purest, most idiomatic English; he had sketched, with a touch incomparably delicate and finished, the intricate mental relations of a meditative but feverish age, of an active yet pensive society; he was a master of that implied and constructive irony which is the last refinement of banter, that irony which is a feature of our modern literature, of which we see no sign in the emphatic satire of Dryden, only an occasional trace in the polemical writings of Pope and Bolingbroke, but which bursts into perfect flower in the serious books of Mr. Thackeray and the satirical speeches of Mr. Disraeli.*

* Full justice has not been done to the remarkable felicity of Mr. Disraeli's 'satiric touch.' Putting the famous Rembrandt-like full-length of Sir Robert aside (as somewhat overdone), the lightly touched sketches of contemporary statesmen which are to be found in his speeches (Palmerston, Russell, Gladstone, Sir Charles Wood) form a gallery of portraits to which any future historian of our time, who desires to represent these men in their habit as they lived, must turn. The sketches are conceived in a satirical spirit: the form is mocking and ironical: but they never degenerate into caricature, and manifest a rarely

That this should have been a pure, healthy, honest, boyishly noble and chivalrous soul—that this high-hearted gentleman should have been tender, gentle, upright, true in thought and deed, did not surprise one; nor yet that he should have had such moods of wild fun and airy riot as are embodied in his lesser works, such moods as Heine describes in one inimitable sentence, when he says, 'At noon I feel as though I could devour all the elephants of Hindostan, and then pick my teeth with the spire of Strasburg cathedral.' But it did surprise one at first to learn that this was the most finished literary artist of his age,—a wise, sad moralist, an extraordinarily subtle humorist, a writer whose stealthy charm and subtle perfection of style and thought almost baffle analysis. This did surprise one, until by some quaint expression, some passing phrase, unconsciously betraying the natural facility, the admirable critical insight of the speaker, the veil was withdrawn, and it became evident that the author of *Vanity Fair* and the man beside you were truly one and the same. Yet, with all his boyishness of manner, there was something leonine about Thackeray. 'And there came up a lion out of Judah!' Miss Brontë exclaimed, when she first saw Lawrence's picture of the giant.

delicate, subtle, and imaginative insight into the characters with which they are occupied. They may be compared to Mr. Leech's drawings, which raise a laugh indeed, but from which a truer notion of the English men and women and children of the Victorian era is to be obtained than from all the portraits painted by the Academicians.

With such a presence, he might easily have been tempted to assume an air of false dignity; but he was too wise to do so; for that bright and frank guilelessness could not fail to be the most consummate charm of a man who, intellectually, possessed the subtlety of the serpent. This openness, indeed, was sometimes inconvenient. He felt blame sensitively, and could not always conceal his sensitiveness. On the other hand, a few sentences of sympathetic appreciation, a few 'kind words,' even when spoken by an unknown critic, were sure to bring cordial thanks from the great man, whose humility was as unfeigned as his greatness.*

And he is gone! and the reign of Queen Anne will not be written by Thackeray! Here is perhaps his latest allusion to the 'ambition,' which he so ardently cherished:—

'Queen Anne has long been my ambition; but she will take many a long year's labour, and I can't ask any other writer to delay on my account. At the beginning of this year I had prepared an announce-

* Here, for instance, is a sentence which, appearing a year before his death, called forth such a note of kindly thanks. 'Men, therefore, whose writings owe their fascination to the "wise sad valour" which lies at the root of all true humour, and to the mellow autumnal hue which falls like the golden lights of harvest aslant the page; the moralists who take *Vanitas!* for their theme—Montaigne, Charles Lamb, William Thackeray—appear to gain a new force and faculty as they grow old. That tender sagacity and gentleness of touch, which charm us so, is long in being learned; 'tis a second nature, scarcely quite formed until the hair is grey, and the brow furrowed.'

ment, stating that I was engaged on that history; but kept it back, as it was necessary that I should pursue my old trade of novelist for some time yet to come. Meanwhile her image stands before St. Paul's, for all the world to look at; and who knows but some one else may be beforehand with both of us, and sketch her off while we are only laying the palette?'

We talked for a while about the dear friend, the noble gentleman, who had gone over to the majority; and then we fell silent, until the Doctor roused us by proposing somewhat shyly to read a paper on the Memorial Poets, one of the latest contributions, as we guessed, to the yet unpublished *De Omnibus*. Somewhat shyly, I say, for when his own writings are in question the Doctor manifests an exceptional shyness. I do not know why this should be, unless, perhaps, that he allows a vein of sentiment, which he resents and ridicules in others, which never enters into his ordinary conversation, to flow from his pen, and touch his written prose. Having secured our assent, he drew a manuscript from his pocket, and began to read.

Against Oblivion, 'who blindly scattereth her poppies,' we wage an incessant but ineffectual warfare. We rear tombstones, and sepulchral urns, and Roman columns, 'whose ashes sleep sublime, buried in air, and looking to the stars,' and Egyptian pyramids, to preserve the unprofitable memory of a name. We strive passionately to perpetuate the perishable. It is an easy thing to be forgotten; but we prefer a vexed

immortality and an unquiet fame to the innocent obscurity of the grave. But this monumental literature is not confined to the tombstone or the urn. The same feeling which rears the rude slab in the remote village churchyard,

> Where happy generations lie,
> Here tutored for eternity,

inspires the *Lycidas* of Milton and the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson. With what may be called occasional memorial poetry we are indifferently supplied. Ben Jonson's matchless epigram occupies the foremost place :

> Underneath this marble hearse
> Lies the subject of all verse—
> Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
> Death ! when thou hast slain another,
> Fair, and learned, and good as she,
> Time shall throw his dart at thee.

Milton himself on this ground is not always very happy. The epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester, who died in childbed in her twenty-third year, is decidedly poor. The lady sits in heaven beside the mother of Joseph—'No Marchioness, but now a Queen,' —a recognition of aristocratic distinctions, which in the situation has an odd sound, especially from the lips of a Republican. But his sonnet on 'My late espoused saint,' his second wife, Catherine Woodcock—

> Her face was veiled; yet, to my fancied sight,
> Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
> So clear as in no face with more delight.
> But O, as to embrace me she inclined,
> I waked; she fled; and day brought back my night—

is tender and solemn; and *Lycidas* discloses the richest bloom of his virgin fancy. The fine lines—

> So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high
> Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
> Where, other groves and other streams along,
> With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
> And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
> In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love—

are, perhaps, unmatched by anything that he afterwards wrote. Dryden tried his hand at memorial verses, with no very brilliant result. They are, as all his work is, strong, massive, masculine; but they are deficient in simplicity of construction and delicacy of touch. It is curious that Dryden, who, as a moralist and satirist, was so eminently simple and unartificial—going so directly to the mark, never failing to hit the right nail on the head—should have grown constrained and turgid when he attempted to enlist the purer and loftier emotions. Somehow on that ground his weighty and magnificent common-sense did not serve him; he faltered where weaker men firmly trod; the habit of that majestic satiric muse, fitted to dignify the pageantry of woe, stifled genuine sorrow and the simple expression of natural feeling. Dr. Johnson thought the ode on Anne Killigrew the noblest in the language; but there is a great gulf between 'Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies, made in the last promotion of the blessed,' and Dante's exquisitely simple—'this youngest of the angels.'

But all these are of the nature of occasional poetry,

'short, swallow-flights of song.' A few poets, however, have addressed themselves to the subject in a more elaborate and particular manner. These memorial poems represent with patience and minuteness the various tints and shades of feeling, the eddies and ripples of thought, which the presence of death causes. Among them the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, and the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson, occupy the chief place. To the *Vita Nuova* and *In Memoriam*, may now be added Mr. Woolner's careful, conscientious, and striking poem.*

* *My Beautiful Lady*, by Thomas Woolner. Let me add here, that in form Mr. Woolner's poem is probably the most artistic of the three. Dante's is a simple narrative. Tennyson describes the scattered verses which comprise *In Memoriam* as 'short swallow flights of song.' Not that *In Memoriam* is a poem which obeys no law. It is not a freak, a caprice, a perverse or erratic whim. On the contrary, it manifests the unity of life, of mental development, of spiritual progress. But Mr. Woolner's poem is cast in a straighter mould. The life in it has been modelled and shaped by an artist. The unity of lyrical emotion is one thing: the unity which an organising intellect achieves is another: and this higher unity, this dramatic order and fitness, are to be found in Mr. Woolner's work. I do not think that there is anything in it specially characteristic of the sculptor: it has colour, luxuriance of fancy, subtlety and complexity of feeling; and although it is true that these are all subordinated to the main purpose of the poem, unless we are prepared to say that singleness and simplicity of design make a poem 'statuesque' (as it is called), we shall hardly acquiesce in a criticism which is as vague as it is fanciful. At the same time it cannot be denied that the arrangement has been meditated; that the parts have been allocated; that a moral has been aimed at; and

It cannot be denied that this form of poetry—poetry dedicated to and associated with the memory of the dead—is a form of poetry eminently natural. It is prompted by feelings which are deeply rooted in human nature. Sorrow seeks expression either in words or in tears. 'There came upon me,' Dante confesses on one such occasion in his simple way, 'a great desire to say something in rhyme.' And later, after Beatrice's death, 'When mine eyes had wept for some while, until they were so weary with weeping that I could no longer through them give ease to my sorrow, I bethought me that a few mournful words might stand me instead of tears.' Tennyson makes the same confession. He 'lulls with song an aching heart:' he will 'out of words a comfort win.' And the impulse is not only natural but irrepressible. As the trees put forth their leaves, as the thrush fills the woodland with its vesper music, so does the poet's sorrow seek vent in his song.

> I do but sing because I must,
> And pipe but as the linnets sing.

He takes refuge in his rhymes, not to parade his affliction, but to ease his heart.

that the author is never diverted into digressions or episodes, however tempting, which are calculated to mar the general effect of his composition. In these respects it differs from the *Vita Nuova* and *In Memoriam*; yet, notwithstanding the marks of premeditation which it bears, it is difficult to suppose that the poet has *not* learned in suffering what he has taught in song, or that 'My Lady' is a fanciful effigy, like Maud, and not a creature of flesh and blood, like Beatrice.

It is natural also that these memorial poems should be principally (indeed, I might say exclusively) devoted to the memory of those who have died in youth. Our tried friend is dead; we knew what was in him; we knew the range and compass of his powers; but the world did not; and we feel that an injustice is done if he is permitted to pass away without recognition. But when the work has been accomplished, when, 'its lavish mission richly wrought,' the spirit leaves our earth, and returns to God, we do not experience the same sense of loss or incompleteness, nor does our tempered regret urgently demand expression. 'The e'en brings a' hame,' says the beautiful Scottish proverb. When the shadows of night are falling, the sheep return to the fold. That is well; that is as it ought to be; the death of the old is a visible and beneficent ordinance of nature. The peaceful light of evening is in the heaven, and on the earth, and on the calm faces of the dead. But when a maiden is struck down in the pride and excellence of her beauty, we cannot restrain a cry of dismay. Those perfect lips were worth a king's ransom this morning; that hand was a queen's dowry. And now they are quite valueless. Death—spare and shrivelled as he looks—is a spendthrift, not a miser; wanton, lavish, indiscriminate, working on no system, obeying no rules, he tosses the jewels of life aside as though they were not better than its dross. Of this sense of dismay, astonishment, incredulity, no experience can divest us. Dante is bewildered by the thought, 'Surely it must some time come to pass that

the very gentle Beatrice must die.' Die! how can death approach so fair and pure a being? Let the heavens look to it. Thus when Helen or Isabel are taken away while the day is yet young, the poet not only feels that a wrong has been done to him and to the earth from which she has been withdrawn in unseemly haste, but experiences a passionate desire to restore, if in words only, the choice jewel which has been so strangely and mysteriously shattered.

Grave men have sometimes said that this memorial poetry is slight and trivial in its nature. In one sense they are right,—it is often slight and trivial,—slight and trivial as the objects which Love appropriates, of which it takes possession, on which it is nourished. No incidents can well be slighter or more trivial than those in the *Vita Nuova*. But such a passion shines through them that each becomes transfigured. Dante casts his regard about the homeliest incidents, and aided by death and intense feeling, he makes them incorruptible and imperishable. The same may be said of the incidents,—the ballad sung on the lawn in the summer night, the Christmas holly, the Christmas games,—which in *In Memoriam* most vividly recall the dead. So also in Mr. Woolner's poem. He recalls the white flutter of his lady's robe in the wood, 'where clematis and jasmine interlace;' how it was caught by the prickly thorns; how he stooped to disentangle it—'oft wounding more than he could heal.'

> I recollect my Lady in the wood,
> Keeping her breath, while peering as she stood

> There, balanced lightly on tiptoe,
> To mark a nest built snug below,
> Leaves shadowing her brow.

And this triviality is in fact the best testimony to the reality of the passion,—as every-day experience proclaims. Death lays his hand on trifles, and they grow rife with suggestion, and rich with recollection. For weightier things you are prepared ; but these trifles—turning up suddenly and unawares—stir the pulses of the memory into feverish play. Thus she moved, or walked, or rode; thus her brown hair was braided; thus her riband was tied; thus she unclasped her glove. It is undoubtedly true that these slight, lovely, familiar traits, which have perished with the body, touch us more acutely, appeal to us more pathetically, than the higher and more abiding traits of character. And thus it happens that the poets, looking back on what has been, fill their pages with this eager passionate trifling,—as grave men may well call it.

Another observation in which there is probably more truth, is that the mind which prefers this kind of poetry is not of the creative order. The production of memorial poetry infers intensity of feeling rather than width of insight. The poet retraces the track of life which stretches behind him like a beaten path, and casts the fire of his imagination along it. The rays of his genius bring every object on the roadside into vivid and brilliant relief. The creative mind, on the other hand, rejoices in construction, which it effects with supple ease and natural facility. Shakspeare and

Walter Scott enjoy an easy royalty. They were never at a loss; they were never hampered nor tired; their imagination was 'aye ready.' Their experience, no doubt, aided them, and is visible in their work; but they did not cling to it; they felt quite sure of their way; whether they had experience to guide them or not, they were not afraid of stumbling or going wrong. Some men can relate a story of real life with admirable clearness; but they become helpless when required to put together out of their own brain an imaginative relation. Will it be deemed rank heresy if I say that the author of the *Commedia* appears to have been wanting in constructive power? There is an air of paradox about such an assertion; and yet in truth the *Paradiso* or the *Inferno*, architecturally considered, is rather a crazy erection. Dante had little inventiveness; but his mind was intensely and magnificently realistic. Give him something to work upon, —the legends of Catholic Europe, his own experience, his love, his hate, stories of Italian lovers, stories of Italian tyrants,—and he could reproduce it in an imperishable shape. The legend became to him a veritable fact, which he saw and felt, in which he believed, to which all his senses bore witness. So he assimilated the legends and allegories of the middle ages, and made them credible. That the author of *In Memoriam* has portrayed a vast variety of characters is true; but it cannot be doubted that his genius is rather lyrical and didactic than dramatic. His characters, unlike Topsy, do not 'grow.' The different men and women are

finely discriminated; but they are discriminated by the reflective, rather than fired and quickened by the dramatic, faculty. And the same observation will be found to apply, more or less, to every poet who has resorted, habitually and familiarly, to this form of poetry.

In their essential features, therefore, these memorial poems, whether written in the thirteenth century or in the nineteenth, have much in common. The development and progress of the story are invariably very similar. There are the trifles which love makes dear; the joy and the pain of memory; the bitter abandonment of loss; the low beginnings of content; the love which rises over death. Yet the spirit in which they are composed is often curiously and widely dissimilar; and marks with special distinctness the epoch to which each belongs. The *Vita Nuova* is as characteristically the work of the thirteenth century as is *In Memoriam* of the nineteenth. I shall speak more at large of these contrasts presently: in the meantime a word or two of explanation about Dante's poem, and Mr. Rossetti's translation.

In the *Vita Nuova*, Dante relates with grave simplicity the story of his love for Beatrice. He tells us how he first saw Beatrice at the beginning of her ninth year; how often in his boyhood he had gone in search of 'this youngest of the angels;' how nine years after he had first beheld her, it happened that the same wonderful lady appeared to him dressed all in pure white, and saluted him with so virtuous a bearing that he seemed then and there to behold the very limits of blessedness;

how she looked when sitting where words were to be heard of the Queen of Glory; how, deceived by a false and evil rumour, she, who was the destroyer of all evil and the queen of all good, denied him her most sweet salutation 'in the which alone was my blessedness;' how he became dumb in her presence; how he grieved when her father died; how she came into such favour with all men that when she passed anywhere folk ran to behold her, and when she was gone by it was said of many—'This is not a woman, but one of the beautiful angels of heaven;' how she bred in those who looked upon her a soothing quiet beyond any speech; how she died, and how for him by her death the city sat solitary; how afterwards a lady pitied him, and how he began to fail in his allegiance to his own lady, 'until there rose up in me on a certain day about the ninth hour, a strong visible phantasy, wherein I seemed to behold the most gracious Beatrice habited in that crimson raiment which she had worn when I first beheld her; also she appeared to me of the same tender age as then;' how thereafter it was given unto him to behold a very wonderful vision; 'wherein I saw things which determined me that I should say nothing further of this most blessed one, until such time as I could discourse more worthily concerning her. And to this end I labour all I can, as she well knoweth. Wherefore, if it be His pleasure through whom is the life of all things, that my life continue with me a few years, it is my hope that I shall yet write concerning her what hath not before been written of any woman. After the which, may it

seem good unto Him who is the Master of grace, that my spirit should go hence to behold the glory of its lady —to wit, of that blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance *qui est per omnia secula benedictus. Laus Deo.*'*

This is the story of the *Vita Nuova*, if story it can be called, and this story Mr. Rossetti has rendered with simplicity, tenderness, and admirable literalness of thought and language. He translates as patiently and truthfully as he paints, and to say so is to say not a little. Nor are the loftier passages beyond his range; in his firm strength there is a composure that is characteristic of Dante. The man who can use the English language as it is used in these translations from the Italian has in himself the makings of a poet.

From this brief sketch of the construction and of the

* Of all love stories the *Vita Nuova*,—the simple relation of a reserved and mystic passion,—is the least sensuous. The experience which the modern poet relates is very different. He has told his love: he has pressed his lady's cheek: he has clasped her to his heart. Nay more, he has stood beside her dying bed; she has spoken words of comfort to him; her last smile rested upon his face. When Death severs such a bond the bitter and the sweet are mixed. It is hard to be parted from what was so dear; but she knew that you loved her better than life; and this intense communion assuages to her the pain of death, and to you the bitterness of separation. Although after Beatrice's death, Dante has but her salutation to fall back upon,—'in which alone was there any beatitude for me,'—yet it may be said quite truly that in one sense death brought these two closer together. It ripened into a sacred and lofty, if mystical, affiance, what, while she abode on earth, could be at best a fanciful tie.

poetry of the *Vita Nuova,* it is obvious that such a work, however similar in its broader outlines, must present many points of contrast to the memorial poetry written by later poets, especially by those who belong to our own age. It may be interesting to note briefly wherein they agree, and wherein they disagree.

There are one or two points in which there is a clear agreement. There is little or no description of Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova.* She is, in so far as direct presentment is concerned, formless and colourless. The *Vita Nuova* is not a love poem in the ordinary sense of the term,—in the sense of Anacreon, or Catullus, or Thomas Moore. There are none of the traditions of amatory verse; no red lips, nor blue eyes, nor brown hair, nor peach-like bloom. Dante seldom rises beyond the *dulce loquentem, dulce ridentem* of Horace's Lalage. It is 'her most sweet speech and her marvellous smile' which hold him captive; that smile whereof he says, 'I say not of this last how it operates upon the hearts of others, *because memory cannot retain this smile nor its operation,*' so marvellous is it. We see little of her besides; a few hints relating to qualities scarcely more sensuous are all that we are favoured with. 'My lady carries love within her eyes; all that she looks on is made pleasanter.' 'She hath that paleness of the pearl that's fit in a fair woman.' Tennyson is even more reserved. Only once, so far as I recollect, does he vaguely allude to the person of his friend,—

> And over that ethereal brow
> The bar of Michael Angelo.

Only once, too—only in his opening stanza—does Mr. Woolner directly describe his lady;—

> I love My Lady: she is very fair:
> Her brow is wan, and bound by simple hair:
> Her spirit sits aloof, and high,
> But glances from her tender eye,
> In sweetness droopingly.

Another trait common to all these poems is the anxiety which is expressed lest the love for the dead should decay or grow cold. Dante, in his frank simple way, relates his own experience. 'Then I perceived a young and very beautiful lady, who was gazing upon me from a window with a gaze full of pity, so that the very sum of pity appeared gathered together in her. . . . The sight of this lady brought me into so unwonted a condition that I often thought of her as of one too dear unto me, and I began to consider her thus: "This lady is young, beautiful, gentle, and wise; perchance it was Love himself who set her in my path, that so my life might find peace." And there were times when I thought yet more fondly, until my heart consented unto its reasoning.' Tennyson gives expression to the sentiment in many moods. Alas for Love's transient horizon! Alas for the perishableness of regret! Darkness will not keep her raven gloss. The victor honours can boast, 'This man loved and lost, but all he was is overworn.' Even as our memory fades 'from all the circle of the hills,' so do we forget those who have left us. They are to us as though they had not been. But the poet learns ultimately that he is not

to charge himself with wrong done to his friend, although regret 'become an April violet, and bud and blossom with the rest.' God is very good; the earth is very fair; man must not weary his spirit with the burden of a hopeless grief. Nor are love and sorrow the brittle and perishable things they seem to be. They may have ceased to demand expression, but they have grown silent because they have grown into the life.

> O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
> O grief, can grief be changed to less?
>
> O last regret, regret can die!
> No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
> Her deep relations are the same,
> But with long use her tears are dry.

Thus these sad poems do not end sadly. On the contrary, the closing hymn is of victory. We have seen with what resolve Dante closes the *Vita Nuova;*

> Beyond the spheres which spread to widest space
> Now soars the sigh that my heart sends above;
> A new perception born of grieving Love
> Guideth it upward the untrodden ways;

'the untrodden ways' which in the *Paradiso* he was to tread with Beatrice by his side. The modern poet, again, when the flood of his sorrow is spent, finds manifold consolations. It is better, he learns, to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. He experiences in his grief 'a strength reserved.' He has been taught to lift 'a cry above the conquered years' to one who listens to his cry, to one who works along with

him. Nor in truth, though he hears no more 'the dear, dear voice that I have known,' has death truly divided him from his friend.

> My love involves the love before;
> My love is vaster passion now:
> Though mix'd with God and Nature thou,
> I seem to love thee more and more.
>
> Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
> I have thee still, and I rejoice:
> I prosper, circled with thy voice,
> I shall not lose thee, though I die.

In these particulars there is, it is obvious, a strong family likeness between the poems of which I have been speaking. But in several respects they differ not less decisively. Dante's insensibility to natural influences is quite as marked as his inaccessibility to spiritual trouble. What a contrast in these respects does he present to the modern poet!

Dante does not doubt. The 'something in the world amiss' does not perplex him. Neither he nor his contemporaries entertained any anxiety as to the relations that existed between them and the invisible world; though the vein of irony, the grim humour not devoid of tenderness, that are visible in certain of their Dances of Death, seem to indicate that the men who drew them had been touched sometimes by 'the riddle of the painful earthy.' Death sits by himself, silent, inscrutable, and turns the globe round between his hands,—a fine conception surely. Death carries the infant softly in his arms, takes the crying child by the hand like its

mother, cuts the string which ties the blind beggar to his dog. Death shuts up the usurer in his own money-chest; from the beauty who says to him pettishly, 'Don't be so boisterous, you filthy wretch,' he plucks her finery; and the rake, opening his arms for his mistress, clasps death to his heart. The only mortal whom he resolutely neglects is the starving beggar, covered with sores and lying in filth, who vainly implores to be released from his misery. But this sardonic spirit, this wild tenderness and irony, this hard hitting at the destroyer and the life-giver—*instrumentum mortis et immortalitatis*—do not appear in Dante. The complications of our mortal life do not disquiet him, nor affect his simple reliance on God. There is no trace in any of his poems, least of any in the *Vita Nuova*, of that moral and intellectual tumult which unsteadies the faith of the modern poet. He has no doubt that heaven is above him, nor any that it is the fit place for his lady. 'Beatrice is gone up into high heaven, the kingdom where the angels are at peace.' When a maiden dies it is because it has pleased the Master of the Angels to call her into his glory. The same words are used when the father of Beatrice is taken. 'Not many days after this (it being the will of the most high God, who also from himself put not away death), the father of wonderful Beatrice, going out of this life, passed certainly into glory.' In the vision of her death he sees the angels bearing her to heaven. 'And I seemed to look towards heaven, and to behold a multitude of angels who were returning upwards, having before them an exceedingly

white cloud; and these angels were singing together gloriously, and the words of their song were these:— "Osanna in excelsis," and there was no more that I heard.' Then Beatrice dies. 'I was still occupied with this poem, when the Lord God of Justice called my most gracious lady unto himself, that she might be glorious under the banner of that blessed queen Mary, whose name had always a deep reverence in the words of holy Beatrice.' And then in the closing section of the poem, he relates what he said to the pilgrims who had come to look upon that blessed portraiture bequeathed to us by our Lord Jesus Christ as the image of his blessed countenance, 'upon which countenance my dear lady now looketh continually.'

On this crystal mirror there is no shadow. No breeze ruffles the tranquil surface of the lake. The doubts (if such they can be called) which Dante expresses are of the most harmless kind, and he confesses them with the artless simplicity of a child. He is not quite sure that it is permissible to write about love in the vulgar instead of the Latin tongue, and he attempts elaborately to explain why 'the number nine' exercised so strong an influence over the life of Beatrice. 'The number three is the root of the number nine; seeing that without the interposition of any other number, being multiplied merely by itself, it produceth nine, as we manifestly perceive that three times three are nine. Thus, three being of itself the efficient of nine, and the Great Efficient of Miracles being of Himself Three Persons (to wit, the Father, the Son, and the Holy

Spirit), which being Three are also One, this lady was accompanied by the number nine to the end that men might clearly perceive her to be a nine, that is, a miracle, whose only root is the Holy Trinity. It may be that a more subtle person would find for this thing a reason of greater subtlety; but such is the reason that I find, and that liketh me best.'

That was Dante's world; the modern poet has inherited a new heaven and a new earth. The firmament which canopied the earth has been rent asunder, disclosing the illimitable abyss. The sun and the moon and the stars do not lighten us alone; our planet is only one of those particles of silver or golden dust which sprinkle infinite space. Dante's theatre, whereon the high drama of the universe was being transacted, has been shattered—shattered as utterly as the classic stage of Olympus. How can the modern poets evade the difficulties which this mighty revolution forces upon their attention? Birth, death, immortality—what do they mean; what language do they speak; what is the secret which they hide? If heaven be not above us, if the earth be not the centre of the universe, on which the regards of its Maker and of his angels are fixed, must not the whole mediæval creed break down? This spiritual and intellectual strife finds, perhaps, its finest expression in *In Memoriam*. 'My friend has been taken from me, and I am haunted by a spectral doubt that I shall be his mate no more. Here, at least, we are parted for ever; my paths are in the fields I know, and his in undiscovered lands. What, then, lies be-

hind death? Shall we retain our individuality, or shall we merge in the general soul? I trust that I shall know him when we meet, if only upon the last and farthest height, surely he will clasp my hand and say, "Farewell, we lose ourselves in light." Or is death indeed the end of all? Shall man—

> Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
> Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
> Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
> Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,
> Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
> Who battled for the True, the Just,
> Be blown about the desert dust,
> Or seal'd within the iron hills?

Or will good be the final goal of ill? Will God refuse to destroy one life that he has made?

> So runs my dream; but what am I?
> An infant crying in the night;
> An infant crying for the light;
> And with no language but a cry.'

These, and such as these, are the questions which assail the modern poet, and which introduce an element of unrest and agitation into his work which did not disturb the serene security of Dante.

Nor is this all. The world which is (or, to speak more accurately, the feeling with which men regard it) as well as that which is to come, has undergone a change. Dante could hold no communion with the storm. He did not seek for sympathy from winds or waves, from sunsets or sunrises, from the purple moor-

land or the windy bent. I think there are not more than two allusions to natural forms in a poem which was written in the Val d'Arno. He speaks in one place of those long hours 'wherein the stars above wake and keep watch;' and in another, he says, 'as I have seen snow fall among the rain, so was there talk mingled with sighs.' That is all. The modern poet, on the other hand, maintains a close and intimate fellowship with nature. She is a witness to his wrongs; she shares his sufferings; he appeals to her as the Hebrew poet appealed: 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!' In *In Memoriam* each mood of nature, the most delicate, the most capricious, the most subtle, reflects some mood of sorrow. Arthur will sleep better beneath the clover sod that takes the sunshine and the rain than in the sailor's vast and wandering grave,—

> And from his ashes may be made
> The violet of his native land.

The world is calm, and the poet is comforted; the winds begin to rise, whirling away the last red leaf, and blowing the rooks about the sky, and he can scarcely brook the strain 'that makes the barren branches loud.' He droops when the dim dawn rises in storm and rain; but his trouble cannot live with April days, nor his sadness in the summer moons. Every aspect of nature recalls the friend who has left him.

> Thy voice is on the rolling air:
> I hear thee where the waters run:
> Thou standest in the rising sun,
> And in the setting thou art fair.

This close and intense sympathy is, as a feature of European thought, characteristically modern; and in *In Memoriam* the glory and sadness of nature stream across the page which is dedicated to an unforgotten friendship, and occupied with the figure of a lost friend.

I have said that these memorial poems close with a note of victory. To a certain extent this is true; but an earthly muse cannot long maintain the imaginative altitude of Isaiah. 'The sun shall no more be thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw herself; for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.' Hers is at best a fugitive and trembling flight. 'We believe—help thou our unbelief—that the departed soul has been received into thy kingdom.' Then comes the keen reaction of nature, the lamentable protest of the affections. It may be as you say; her pure spirit may have rejoined the redeemed in heaven:

> But in dear words of human speech
> We two communicate no more.

That it is enormously difficult to rise above this weakness of nature, universal experience testifies. To mortal eyes, the way that leads through the valley of the shadow of death is dim and perilous. Among the illustrations to the *Pilgrim's Progress*, designed by that

great and noble painter, David Scott,* a series of three are devoted to Christian's passage through the valley. A veiled figure, wearing a kingly crown, broods over the abyss, and casts a deep shadow upon the narrow path. Into the impenetrable shade the pilgrim, with head bent low, slowly advances, his shield up-raised, and his sword drawn. Next we catch a glimpse of him amid the thick vapours, contending with ugly phantoms and evil shapes. Then 'at sunrise Christian looks back on the valley.' He is weary and faint, and worn; his armour is battered; his shield is rent. But he is safe; that hideous dream in the dark is past; like a man recovered from sickness, he breathes in strength with eager haste; and in the light of golden day, seated upon the breezy mountain summit, he looks back upon the dismal valley. Then, as the sunrise broadened upon the hills, Christian said, 'He hath turned the shadow of death into the morning.' The sense of happy

* It is satisfactory to find that so competent and exacting a critic as Mr. Rossetti fully recognises the claims of this great and neglected painter. 'David Scott,' he says, in the supplementary chapter to the *Life of William Blake*, 'will one day be acknowledged as the painter most nearly fulfilling the highest requirements for historic art, both as a thinker and a colourist (in spite of the great claims in many respects of Etty and Maclise), who had come among us from the time of Hogarth to his own. In saying this it is necessary to add distinctly that it is not only, or even chiefly, on his intellectual eminence that the statement is based, but also on the great qualities of colour and powers of solid execution displayed in his finest works, which are to be found among those deriving their subjects from history.'

release is expressed with admirable fidelity in the toil-worn yet sinewy frame, in the weary yet joyful face. This wonderful sketch is worth a hundred discourses. *We* cannot penetrate the thick gloom; but to the open eyes of the dead, 'the shadow of death is turned into the morning.' So spake the Hebrew poet; the English poet has put a like hope into different words,—

> Death has made
> His darkness beautiful with thee.

One word more. It is noticeable that the writers who, raised aloft on the wings of imaginative inspiration, have looked most closely upon the conditions of the invisible world, find but one ground on which to stay the assurance of immortality. 'Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away:' but 'charity never faileth.' The heaven of the glorified body, wherever situated, however reached, *is* a reality. The love which moves heaven and all the stars, which knits earth to God, which makes our vain and empty life a blessed and precious possession, assures us that this is no cunningly-devised fable. And the love which never reached its earthly close will most surely find in that Land of Promise its fruition and its crown.

'Is it not so? in most sober earnest, must not this be the case? Consider only for one moment, I beseech you. We grow faint and weary when striving to pierce the veil which hangs between us and the host who have crossed into the kingdom of the dead. Whither are

they scattered whom we knew upon the earth? How is that chosen band to be reunited? how are they to be gathered together once more from all the margins of the illimitable universe? Dante, fixing his eyes on the eyes of Beatrice, found himself in heaven. 'I was transported by the attraction of love,' he says. 'The attraction of love!' This is the magnet which draws the wandering spirits together. This is the sole talisman which they obey. On this reality alone the unrobed soul can rest. To it the ghosts of other generations are unsubstantial phantoms; it needs the sunshine of an earth-born affection to warm it into happiness. Life is so brittle that we fear sometimes to love too much. It is perilous, it seems, to venture our all on so frail a bark. Yet are we most foolish to harbour such a fear; for what welcome will the next world give us, if we garner no love in this? We may be sure that only the mightiest passions can survive the shock of death, can pass through the dismal portal and across the dreary river, and from among the souls, 'thick as leaves in Vallombrosa,' of unnumbered and unremembered generations, draw the beloved to our side.

Here Doctor Diamond folded up his manuscript, and turned round sharply upon his brother, the Commodore. The Captain was the only one who ventured to criticise on such occasions, and his criticisms, in their utter simplicity, sometimes hit hard. But to-day he merely remarked in an under tone, 'The best piece of

Memorial Poetry that I know is Dr. Fisher's epitaph at Rattray :—

> Here Dr. Fisher lies interred,
> Who filled the half of this kirkyard.'

Whether the shaft was aimed at his brother it was impossible to guess, but we all admitted that the epitaph was an admirable adaptation of Wren's :—'Si monumentum quæris, circumspice!' 'That was my achievement in this world; whatever may be its worth, or its reverse of worth, give me the benefit of it; do not defraud me of my dues.'

Then our talk wandered away, and when it returned, I found that we were speculating where the *domus ultima* of each of us should be placed. 'Bury me by the bracken-bush that grows on yonder lily lee,' the Doctor murmured, in the words of the great ballad. I fancied that I should like to be planted under the old oak in the Chase—the Lovers' Oak, they call it; but Letty declared that she must lie within hearing of the sea,—

> Upon the beachèd verge of the salt flood.

'Ay,' replied the Captain, 'Letty is a true tar. For myself, I would fain hear the night-wind rattle through the rigging. There is a green knowe ayont the Suitor's Seat; a man that's laid there gets a grand out-look across the sea, o' moonlight nights.'

But at this point the Doctor interfered, declaring that such speculations were unprofitable, and that it was well, when the brains were out, the man should die.

As soon as he was done with his body, it would become a matter of perfect indifference to him how it was disposed of. Then he added,

'Unless you are prepared to fire St. Paul's, or write the *Odyssey*, or paint the Transfiguration, or buy the *Times* newspaper, it is useless to strive with oblivion. Much better give up the battle, at once and for ever. When I look on tombstones and *immortelles*, and all such rubbish, I am reminded of the unlucky people who are struggling to keep themselves respectable. It is of no use. The water rises above their heads. Do what they will, they are sinking step by step. Why not rather be thankful for release? The heart-burn is cooled, the throbbing is quieted, at last; let us lie down gratefully, and be forgotten.'

Here he was interrupted by the dinner-bell.

IV.

COMMODORE DIAMOND.

I AM sometimes very jealous of the Commodore,—both Letty and Sissy are so uncommonly fond of their uncle. Yet I cannot wonder that they love the good, wise, simple-hearted sailor.

Captain Diamond was absent from his native country for the best part of sixty years. He was a mere boy when they sent him to sea; he is a grey-headed man now,—but his eye is not dimmed, nor his natural force abated, and, like many seamen, he retains not a little of his youthfulness. He lost his left arm in one of the swampy river-fights of Africa; but aided by art, which has screwed a sort of imitation arm of rather a rude sort on the stump, he can cast a salmon-fly, and bring down a brace of grouse, right and left, to this day. Except for his grey hair and his stump, he is very much what he was five-and-fifty years ago. He has taken up life precisely where he left it off on going on board the *Wasp* about the beginning of the century. He had been brought up among the hills, at a time when gentle and simple spoke the same language; and the Doric which he had then acquired, in spite of a

lifetime spent under African suns and among Indian islands, still sticks to him. His acquaintance with literature had not sensibly increased during his period of service. His luck had kept him at out-of-the-way stations, where new books were as scarce as bank-notes; and he had carried none with him except his Bible and an odd volume of *Tom Jones*. So he had lived through the age of Byron, and Wordsworth, and Scott, and Tennyson, without having read a line that any one of them had written. When he returned home he was as thirsty as a camel. He drank like a fish. He was not, indeed, a rapid reader; but reading slowly, steadily, continuously, he got over an immense lot of ground. He devoured miles of poetry. He consumed the whole Waverley Novels. Grey hairs and sixty years had not dried up the well of poetry in his breast. He was as gallant and chivalrous as one of Froissart's heroes. And that I take it was the reason why he was such a favourite with the women, and with his nieces in particular,—they recognised, in his simple heartiness, the courtesy of the knight, the devotion of the cavalier.

The Commodore, of course, was not exactly like other people. When a man has been beating about the Pacific from his tenth to his sixtieth year inclusive, it is hardly to be expected that, on his return to civilised life, he will settle at once into the rut. He liked to feel the east wind whistling about his ears. He had a trick of tumbling out of a four-posted bed. He would leave his window open during the coldest night of the year. But his efforts to keep himself cool were

not successful; he declared that he could not draw breath at night in the Cottage, and was forced to retreat to a more congenial temperature. He converted a small tool-house, or summer-house, which had previously been occupied by Donald alone, into his bedroom. Donald slept below,—the Captain slung his hammock overhead. The house for some reason had been built across the stream,—which was there made to turn a toy-like wheel, and leap over a miniature fall. This arrangement, however, served two ends,—it introduced a thorough draught, so that of a windy night the Captain rocked in his hammock; and Donald cursed his rheumatism, and muttered angrily in his sleep, while the plash of the falling water was music to the old sailor's ear. He kept a speaking-trumpet beside him, with which he would summon Donald at any hour of the day or night,—using a nautical phraseology, popular enough on the quarter-deck, but regarded by Donald with supreme contempt, as 'the lingo of outlandish haythens.' Always after a storm, Sissy, who is as early as a lark, pays the Captain a morning visit, to make sure that he has not been blown away to sea, or driven upon the rocks. Whether fair or foul, indeed, scarcely a morning passes that Sissy does not climb the steep stair that leads to the old gentleman's apartments; and while he is putting the finishing touch to his toilet, or sewing a button on his shirt, the little lady spells leisurely through a chapter of the Old Testament, greatly to his edification. The Old Testament is the Captain's favourite; he delights in the records of travel

and battle which it contains. The other morning I entered the room without their perceiving me. The Captain, seated on his bed, was mending a pair of braces which had been mended before; Sissy was perched on a high stool close to the open window, round which apple blossoms clustered, with the Captain's well-worn Bible upon her lap. She was reading in the tenth chapter of the Book of Joshua,—when she came to a very long word, the Captain helped her through,—occasionally interrupting her to state his own views on the position of the contending parties, and the skill or want of skill which they displayed.

'Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night. And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them unto Azekah, and unto Makkedah. Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.'

'Ay, Sissy,' said the Commodore, reflectively, 'he was a first-rate fighter. Jist a second Wallington. Put the book down, my dear, they'll be waiting for us at the house.'

Then after breakfast Letty would take possession of him, and they would establish themselves for an hour by the river-bank. The seat that circles the aged plane is their favourite rendezvous. Here Letty reads him her school-exercises,—her exercitations in prose and verse. For young ladies in these days, whose education is about finished, are expected to give the finishing touch with their own hands. Letty belongs to a class of sweet girl-graduates,—morning doves 'who sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,' ere they take wing, and flee finally away into unknown latitudes, where whiskered pandours and fierce hussars are waiting to bring them down. Week after week these pretty scholars, fluttering between earth and heaven, ink their delicate fingers, and tease their graceful heads. Some of them, I fear, think it rather a bore; but it agrees with Letty's humour, and her exercises, the Commodore informs me, are marvellously well expressed. I don't think that she selects him from respect for his critical faculty; but she likes a confidant, who is simple and natural, who does not laugh at her little heroics, and who loves her as though she were a child of his own. I can see and hear them thus engaged from my window of a morning,—a slight tremor perceptible sometimes in Letty's rich voice as she reads,—the Commodore with a cloud of glory—a nimbus—about his head, for

Letty will not hear of his sitting out in the open air without his pipe. Superficially unlike, there is a striking family resemblance between the simple-minded tar and his wayward and brilliant niece. Letty has a fund of shrewd common-sense, and her temper is sceptical; yet there are times when she surrenders herself to the guidance of a visionary imagination. She is at heart a mystic. In the Captain it is easy to discern the same homely shrewdness, the same unworldly enthusiasm.

The Captain, communicative by nature, likes 'a crack;' and there are often freshness and raciness in his views of books and men. He has a vivid power of giving body and shape to the heroes and heroines of whom he reads. He instinctively identifies mythical and historical personages with the real Englishmen of to-day,—Leonidas being an earlier Rupert, Joshua a second Wellington.

'It's a fine poem,' said the Commodore, solemnly, the other evening, removing his glasses and looking meditatively into the fire, as he laid Pope's *Iliad* aside.

'Tinsel,' responded the Doctor, 'tinsel and varnish. The only good lines in the whole book are stolen from Dryden. And, by the way, he is a most unscrupulous conveyancer. When he wrote,

> E'en when with transport blackening all the strand,
> The swarming people hail their ship to land,

had he forgotten,

> He is not now as when on Jordan's strand,
> The joyful people thronged to see him land,
> Covering the beach, and blackening all the strand.

And when he closed the *Odyssey* with,

> The virgin-seen of Jove
> In Mentor's form confirmed the full accord,
> *And willing nations knew their lawful lord,*

had the closing lines of *Absalom and Achitophel* clean escaped him?—

> Henceforth a series of new time began,
> The mighty years in long procession ran,
> Once more the god-like David was restored,
> *And willing nations knew their lawful lord.*

Certainly not:—he knew them as well as you or I do. When he was about it, I wonder he didn't "convey" the greatest line in English poetry—

> The mighty years in long procession ran.

What a line!' said the Doctor, in a sort of pious rapture, looking up to heaven.

'That chap Hector,' observed the Commodore, who didn't appear to have been impressed by his brother's remarks, 'is about as fine a fellow as ever I came across.'

But the Doctor was in a combative humour. 'Pish!' he exclaimed, derisively. 'A mere barbarian, with no virtues save the natural instincts of savagery, fidelity to his clan, love for his wife and family. No; the imaginative conception of the *Iliad* is the matchless son of Peleus. He is the most perfect type of the Pagan warrior and statesman that the world has ever seen. Restraint, magnanimity, tenderness, self-control—all

the virtues we would the least expect in a man of an originally ardent temper,—coloured though they be by a dark mental gloom, the sadness prophetic of early death—mark, one after another, the conduct of Achilles. But Hector is a mere lad,—who fights well and gallantly no doubt, and is not unfaithful to his young pretty wife—and small thanks to him.'

'How did they get on afterwards?' asked the Commodore; 'when they had sacked Troy, and got back to Greece? And what did they do to Helen?'

So, as it appeared that the sailor was in a peaceful humour, and could not be got to show fight, the Doctor put Mr. Worsley's admirable translation of the *Odyssey* into his hands, and went off to visit a patient who was nearing that awful gate,—*janua vitae et mortis.*

I was anxious to learn what the veteran thought of Odysseus; and about a fortnight afterwards I discovered him under the elm-tree with the volume open beside him. He was not reading at the moment: he has a trick of reading a few lines, and then allowing his mind and his eyes to wander off, while he compares the passage with his own experience, or the experience of his messmates.

'He's capital at a yarn,' he began; 'he keeps the story moving briskly—it never flags. And I like the man himself. He is home-sick, and ever dreaming about the wife and weans across the water; yet he can share, not without content, the couch of an immortal. Just like the Admiral.' (Horatio Nelson is always *the* Admiral with him.) 'The Admiral could never resist a

woman. Swift and keen against a foe; but saft as eider's down in a woman's hand. Aweel, aweel! the cutties hae a good deal to repent o', for the last twa or three thousand years or thereby. I canna wonder that they ca'd him the wise Odysseus. Yet though crafty, he is not base. Though he is never headstrong, though he ever keeps himself weel in hand—yet he can don his armour, and draw his sword, like a true gentleman and a fearless soldier. Now, let me tell you, Mr. Gray, that is a kind of character that we like the better the older we grow. There's nae wut in fighting against what maun be. A man may tear his hair and swear at his luck till he's black in the face, but it wunna move the Eternal purpose a single inch. This is what Odysseus has gathered in his wanderings. He submits cheerfully, or if not cheerfully, at least without vain defiance, to the Immortals,—or rather to fate and death, which are stronger than the capricious Gods. I ken naething better in its speerit than what he says to Calypso, when he is fain to try another venture. I was just thinking about it when you came up:

> But if some God amid the wine-dark mere
> With doom pursue me and my vessel mar,
> Then will I bear it as a brave man should.
> Not the first time I suffer. Wave and war
> Deep in my life have graven many a scar;
> Let this be numbered with the labours gone.'

So the veteran had been fascinated by this wonderful old story, which is as wild as Baron Munchausen and as minutely real as De Foe. But I think it was the

incessant sparkle of the sea in every page, and the pretty faces of the Greek girls, mortal and immortal, that chiefly won him. 'He must have kent the sea weel, the chap that wrote it, whoever he was.' And he repeated, one after the other, half-a-dozen passages which his memory had retained, such as—

> Telemachus beside the barren wave
> Paced forth in melancholy mood alone;
> He in the hoary deep his hands did lave,
> And to Athene prayed.

And he conceived a special liking for the Phæacians, and the white-armed Nausicaa, who is so proud of her sea-girt people :—

> That mortal is not living, nor can be,
> Who brings us sword and fire. Far off we dwell,
> Loved by the Gods and zoned by the deep sea.

After Nausicaa and Calypso, he was chiefly interested in Helen. 'The cutty!' he said, 'and so her husband took her hame wi' him. Well, he is a fine gentleman, worth a dozen of that feckless Paris. How noble, and hospitable, and sweet-mannered he is, this hero of the golden-hair, as they ca' him in these parts.

> Good sooth have we then never broken bread
> In strange men's houses, and found love grow wild
> In far-off lands as hitherward we sped!

He has learnt the lessons of adversity, and even the wilful Helen has been subdued by his brave gentleness. And the beautiful sinner who left her husband and her child, is just as desperately beautiful as ever. In she

comes, sailing like a white-winged swan, and when her handmaids have arranged her spindle, and the violet wool, and the silver basket which Alcandra gave her, she sits down as calm and superb in her beauty as if a deluge of blood had not been spilt for her sake. Of course she is ready to confess, in a pretty off-hand way, that it was wrong and ungrateful in her to run away from home; but then—but then—it was not her fault: she had lippened to Aphrodite; Aphrodite was to blame; and she quickly repented the step she had taken:—

> Already I bewailed the day,
> When Aphrodite did my steps convey
> From Sparta and my fatherland so dear,
> Leaving my child an orphan far away,
> And couch, and husband who had known no fear,
> First in all grace of soul, and beauty shining clear.

And so, that little adventure concluded, and Troy in ashes, and many heroes in Hades, they are all reconciled again, and she has been taken back to the couch of her forgiving lord:—

> And near him long-robed Helen, the divine, lay down.

Ah! those women! those women!' With which general reflection the Commodore relapsed into silence.

Here we were joined by the Doctor and Letty. I told him of the subjects we had been discussing. He was not prepared to agree with any of us—and so he informed us.

'What a fuss these fellows make about little or nothing! I don't believe that Helen was a bit prettier

than Letty or Bell. How many were killed and wounded before Troy? What was the entire distance that Ulysses travelled during the twenty years that he stayed from home? I believe that one of Mr. Mac Ivar's steamers would make the voyage in four-and-twenty hours—in a week at most. Compare the returns of killed and wounded with those of an American battle, where they think nothing of leaving fifteen or twenty thousand dead men upon the field. That tremendous American epos,—that Iliad of the modern world,—when will they find a poet equal to the theme?'

The Doctor had started a fruitful subject,—one on which much may be spoken and written hereafter. The light that falls upon the heroic figures of classical history is not due to the consecration of poetry alone. The old ballad-singers did not make heroes out of mere moss-troopers. A skirmish in which a score are slain may show more of the great qualities of men than a battle where twenty thousand are awkwardly and stupidly butchered. Odysseus took ten years to return to Ithaca; but then he was sailing over charmed seas; the Immortals were leagued against him: he had to escape Circe and Scylla; it can occasion no surprise that he should have been longer delayed than the modern tourist. The American moralist makes greatness a matter of bulk. Yet the wide Atlantic will never rival the shallow inlets and channels of the Ægean; and the heroic temper, the heroic attitude, are quite independent of numbers. Rivers of blood may be poured out, thousands and tens of thousands may

perish, and yet the contest may no more deserve the minstrel's celebration than the sanguinary feuds of savage beasts. They say that somewhere about a million of men have died upon American battle-fields: of all these battle-fields is there one whose name posterity will care to recall? What is picturesque or striking in any one of them? What stirs the imagination? What appeals to the heart?

I am told that there are a number of irreligious writers and thinkers in this country,—Jowetts, Maurices, Colensos, authors of *Essays and Reviews;* yet I question if they have together produced a tithe of the sceptical feeling that one of these battle-fields has to answer for. Day after day thousands of lives are wantonly sacrificed for a cause which no American man or woman can describe in intelligible language. We have been in use to regard human life as a gift to be cherished; we feed it with costly oil; we watch over it as the Virgins watched the sacred flame. Yet in ten days, if we choose, we can reach a land where it is consumed like stubble, we can mix with a people who waste it with strange and terribly levity. Although we,—spectators beside the footlights,—fail to discern the drift of the play, history, they say, will be able to estimate what these spendthrift wars have purchased.

> Others, I doubt not, if not we,
> The issue of our toils shall see;
> And—we forgotten and unknown—
> Young children gather as their own
> The harvest that the dead had sown.

Ay—but what a harvest, what a rank and bitter growth, will be gathered from fields where the dead lie so thickly! Do we not owe as much to the wolf that was trapped, or to the wild-cat that fell to the hunter's rifle last night, as to the men who die in a bootless, murderous, fratricidal war?

The Doctor listened to such views with marked impatience. His sympathies were entirely with the North. He was a vehement advocate of non-intervention. 'Call them wild cats, if you choose,' he would say; 'but let the wild cats fight it out among themselves, at least.'

The Commodore was enlisted upon the other side. The pluck of the Confederates had won his regard. The tenacity, the address, the valour of this handful of men contending against a mighty empire, was a spectacle the like of which, he held, had rarely been witnessed in modern times. 'Non-intervention, forsooth!' quoth the sailor, kindling up; 'we are to make a ring, and let two madmen cut each other's throats. The Yankees tell us that they mean to extirpate the people of the South, and Christian nations are to stand by the while and see this great outrage perpetrated. By the Lord! rather than aid and abet as our governors have done, I 'd turn Tory,' said the Commodore, who was suspected of coquetting with a sort of pastoral Radicalism.

'And why not?' replied the Doctor, with dignified severity. And why not? we repeat more mildly. Surely the Commodore,—brave as a hero, tender as a woman,—would have made an excellent Tory.

'Thus we play the fools with the time, and the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us.' Even while we idly talk and emptily sympathise, the strongest battalions are proving across the Atlantic that Providence is on their side. Charleston has been evacuated. The beautiful and heroic city—the Leyden, the Antwerp, the Londonderry of the New World—is fallen. *Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo! facta est quasi vidua domina gentium.*

Oh, vanquished band of heroes! my heart bleeds for you. Not unmoved can I contemplate your defeat. For the end draws near. The cruel anomaly, which so constantly paralyses the faith and the intelligence of civilised humanity, is about to be repeated. A happier Poland is in the hands of the spoiler. Heroic daring, invincible determination, sublime confidence, are again to be bloodily trampled out. Well, let the Victor hoard his barren gains,—*your* course at least is clear. Close up your broken columns, your thinned and wasted lines. It is possible that even yet your courage and constancy may reap the tardy harvest: it may be that, standing at bay on the skirts of the wilderness, you will drive the invader back, and keep your altars pure. But even if you fail, you fail as heroes, not as cowards, fail. Your sons and brothers have lived and died well,—live as they lived, die as they have died. Hold fast your integrity,—be humble, patient, temperate, magnanimous to the end. Let no stain of craven fear, of unmanly despair, tarnish the lustre of your shield. So may you fall to misery, but not to

baseness; so may you sink to sleep, but not to shame. So, when the storm of battle is spent, and the unequal conflict is decided, may you put off your armour, and lie down to rest,—whether at the gates of your cities or of your mountains: accepting the death you once thought terrible as the gift of Him who knew and granted what was best.*

But enough of this. I have contrived to wander from woodland politics and the fancies of poetry, into the wide arenas of public life. For, somehow, do what I may, go where I will, I cannot abstract my regards from those who remain in the great world outside. The lark is building her nest in the clover-field, and the cushat is crooning in the elm-tree; the while, from afar, come echoes to which I cannot choose but hearken, —the noise of battles and the counsels of statesmen. As I listen to these mighty echoes, I cease to hear the songs of the woodside. I am carried away in imagination to the tents which whiten the plain of the Eider and the valleys of Virginia,—to the grey-headed generals and the grey-headed diplomatists who are leading armies and nations to Victory and to Defeat.

* The last sentence is adapted from a noble passage in the concluding volume of *Modern Painters*.

V.

AMONG THE WILD FOWL.

SISSY had honoured me with her company at luncheon, and, while plying her knife and fork assiduously, favoured me with her opinions on things in general. She was in a somewhat speculative mood. 'I haven't growed yet,' she observed. 'The black dog at the farm has quite stopped growing—but I haven't stopped—how's that? It's good for growing to stand in the rain without your hat—that's the way the pigs get fat. There are twelve little piggies — did you know? only old Grumpy eat two—and my bantam cock is laying his eggs in the white goose's house—isn't he ridiculous? I was at Nancy Brown's yesterday, having fried potatoes, and forgot my boots. I do declare, here's Horace—what a plague he is, to be sure, to come when we're dining! I thought you had been with Letty, Horace?' she said, as that young gentleman entered the room, and then she returned to her knife and fork without taking further notice of him.

That ingenuous young gentleman, however, declared that he had not been with Letty (a transparent fiction,

for the two had been visible in the shrubbery half an hour before, and how he eased his conscience I don't know), but that he was going down to shoot *whaups* at the Mussel Pier, and had come round this way to take me with him. Horace was the son of old Dean Lovelace, and (of course like the rest of us in these parts) one of Letty's lovers. The Dean's duties lay quite at the other side of Hazeldean, so that he could not be considered exactly a neighbour, though few days elapsed when his son, 'on leave' from the metropolis, might not be seen helping Letty to water her flowers, or the Captain to arrange his birds. The Dean was a polished churchman of the old school, who played a good hand at whist, and did not vex himself with the spiritual controversies of a younger generation. He could be quietly and majestically indignant if you trumped his winning suit; but on the whole his temper was even and bland; he was not anxious to play the inquisitor; and though personally rather inclining to the High Church party (in so far, at least, as a love for old books and old habits and old wine was involved), he would no more have dreamt of trying to turn Mr. Stanley or Mr. Maurice out of the church than he would have dreamt of turning them out of the club. The one act would have been quite as offensive to his natural courtliness as the other; for these gentlemen having been regularly introduced and ballotted for, had as good a right to remain in the 'Athenæum' as he himself had, and no man—lay or cleric—was entitled to impeach their honesty. The church was wide enough for them

all, he would say. He frankly confessed that—being satisfied with St. Paul—he had little acquaintance with modern theology; nor did he care for argument; even when attacked by the Doctor he seldom showed fight, unless for the odd trick. When the Doctor asserted that Churches took as naturally to persecution as ducks to the water, the Dean would content himself by replying that men of an intolerant disposition were to be found in other professions (the medical, of course, being excepted); when the Doctor eloquently denounced the bondage of subscription, the Dean, filling his tastefully-cut claret-glass—bunches of grapes and vine leaves formed the pattern—with '41, would remark tranquilly that he had never felt the worse for it; and it was evident that he spoke the truth. It was difficult to come to close quarters with this courteous, high-bred, well-dressed, old-fashioned, impalpable gentleman; and so the Doctor found it. There was a good deal of the father in the son,—only it might be doubted whether an additional five-and-twenty years would as effectually tame the younger Lovelace into bland compliance and dignified neutrality. The Dean had, in fact, reduced the great modern principle of 'non-intervention' into a practical rule of conduct. He carried neutral goods, which are not liable to be seized by belligerents. Whereas the youth never saw a scamp beating his wife, or a big boy thrashing a little one, without immediately mixing in the fray,—occasionally to the serious detriment of his eyes.

'Now,' said Sissy, deliberately, when she had finished,

'tell me a story, Horace.' Sissy was pleased to hold that Horace had a gift in that direction, which he was bound to exercise on all occasions for her delectation. This is the age of 'verses adapted for young persons,' —grave men leave their books to compose songs for the nursery and ballads for their babes. 'I don't see why one shouldn't have a shy at it,' said Horace. 'It seems to pay. In the meantime, Sissy, here's a little thing translated from the Gaelic of Ossian, his minor poems, and you'll scarcely find anything more eminently instructive anywhere, even in English.'

ON BABY.

I.

A rosy brat
Fair and fat;
Goes pit-a-pat,
Without her hat,
Among the heather,
In any weather.
Tumbles down,
Bumps her crown;
Bobbing, sobbing,
Cribbing, fibbing,
Eating, bleating,
Chaffing, daffing,
One and all together—
Our blue-bell among the heather!

II.

Kicking her legs
Under the pegs,

When the sun shines,
Then baby dines;
When the sun's hid
Baby in bed,
Sleeping as aisy
As a pink daisy,
Warms her nose
Under the clothes,
And dreams
Of the gleams
Of the angels dear,
Who drink Hebe's beer
(On the sly),
To keep their heads clear,
In the sky,
My dear.

III.

An urchin
Who's much in
The jolly green sea:
Where the whales,
With their tails,
And the mar-maids,
For barmaids,
Are taking their tea,
(And the puffins
Their muffins),
With just the laste
Taste
In the world, my dove,
Of something hot-
-ter
To keep out the wat-
-ter
While the lobsters curl their whiskers, love.

'Go on,' Sissy said solemnly, as Horace paused out of breath.

'That's all,' he answered; 'but there's a continuation by a different hand.'

Sweet surprise
In blue eyes,
Clear as heaven
On summer even;
And a nose,
Which I suppose
Is the neatest
And the sweetest
And completest
Of all noses,
Or all roses,
Ever known
Or—blown.

The legend finished, the last fig discussed, and Sissy consigned for the afternoon to the companionship of Donald and the Skye, we started for the Mussel Pier, making our way through a stiff north-easter, and pelting shower of sleet, as we best might.

'Tis a wild day at sea! The bay is crossed with crested billows; the skua gulls are screaming over the uptorn tangle which the sea has cast on the beach; a troubled gleam of rainbow touches the troubled water and the slate-coloured cloud of rain in the offing. On the grey edges of the driven sleet, dimly visible through it, a large barque rushes on before the blast. She has beat about the horizon the whole morning, but cannot

weather the Burrough Head, and now—unable to live the night out yonder—makes straight for the harbour mouth. 'Tis her last chance, and she must hurry on, for in another hour the retreating tide will shallow the channel, and strand her upon its beach. There,—you see her clearly now. A great Dutch barque—heavy and unwieldly—her rain-beaten sails sadly tattered—a red flag flying at her mizzen. On she comes with Dutch-like deliberation, yawing over the swell as if she would shake every timber in her to bits, and each moment nearing the white surf that breaks upon the bar. That is the point of danger. The bar is close outside the harbour mouth, and one after the other the great waves—mountains of water that tower up high over the pier, and seem to drain the sea to its bottom —burst with a thundering boom upon it.

'He's keepin' ower far to lee-'ard,' says one nautical-looking old bird. 'He'll land her on the back o' the pier.'

'Up with your top-gallantsail, man,' shouts another with an oath, as if he expected the skipper out yonder in the tempest to hear him. 'Clap on every rag you have, you ould idiot;' and he uses his arms like a pair of flails, to indicate what is needed.

The hint is taken, the topsail is slowly unfurled, and the barque, with better 'way' upon it, keeps up gallantly through the surf. As a mere matter of speculative curiosity the spectators, I dare say, would have wished to witness the effect which the billow that has just now broken like a cataract would have had upon

her; but the steersman, who with some half dozen bearded Fins is now visible on the deck, has handled his tools well, and brings her rolling in upon the monster's back. Then there is a brief interval of calm —thirty seconds or so—and before the next 'sea' breaks, a cheer has greeted the drenched crew, and the storm-beaten is within shelter of the pier.

After we had seen the Fins safe on shore, we went down to the point of the Mussel Pier. The herring-fishers use it in summer; but in winter and spring it is a lonely place. A jetty, two hundred yards in length, built upon the margin of one of the deep and narrow channels, runs out among the islands. On the seaward side a high storm-wall protects it from the east wind and from the storms which lash it during the winter months. A fantastic group of islands lies between it and the open sea, so that not unfrequently when the sea outside is fiercely agitated, the grand canal which separates it from the nearest island, and the labyrinth of canals which communicate with this main artery, are left unmolested and unvexed. The summits of the islands are covered with bleached débris and shells; from the high-water mark downwards with barren dulse and tangle. It is a chill spring day, as I have said; a biting east wind bears the dull clouds before it to the land, and makes the face of the sea look even bluer than usual. A shower of sleet sometimes comes down the wind, and pellets of hail strike sharply against the face. Yet the sun shows now and again, casting a dreary gleam upon the wind-beaten rocks and the lead-coloured sea. I got into a

favourite retreat—a low seat immediately behind the parapet, protected by two or three mighty boulders, that had been brought here to be shipped away somewhere, but had been left behind and forgotten, on either hand. A snug little cabin in winter for the sportsman; in summer a pleasant breathing-place for the student and the idler. Down below, especially when a troubled gleam strikes the granite, it is positively warm; but I have merely to raise my head to a level with the parapet to behold the bleakest of seas, and to encounter a wind that cuts to the bone. Horace takes up a position twenty yards to the front, where he can command three of the channels at the very extremity of the jetty. Gun in hand he crouches behind the corner-stone of the parapet, paying me an occasional visit when the cold becomes too intense for passive resistance. For a long time nothing rewards his assiduity. A flock of solan geese—there are six or eight of them—are fishing in the tide-way beyond the islands, their lustrous and dazzling white showing out clearly against the murky sky, while they fly to and fro, or descend through the air into the water, raising only a brief sparkle of foam, as, in the swift abandonment of their descent, they cut the water like a knife. The fall of the solan is unique: arresting itself suddenly in mid-air, it gathers its feet and wings together, and drops head-foremost into the water, three hundred feet below, it may be. But none of them approach within range, and a clamorous flock of terns which are making their way in the teeth of the wind, slowly, laboriously, but with surpassing elegance

and airy pertinacity, are not deemed worthy of a shot.

See, however, on a sudden, a head poised gracefully upon what, in its small way, may be called a swan-like neck, rises quietly out of the water, about half-way across the channel. The eye is bright, intelligent, and keen, and glances anxiously around in every direction. Not quickly enough, however, to save it from the mists of death; for Horace has brought his gun to bear upon it before it has been a second in sight. A sharp report, a brief struggle upon the surface, and a red-throated diver turns up its white belly to the sky. The same scene is now repeated more than once; for the rising tide has brought a shoal of *baddocks* within the islands, and the wild fowl follow them through the channels in unwonted numbers. First there is another red-throated diver,—a beauty, with the red patch upon her throat in rare perfection, as can be seen even from this distance, —a species of hooded merganser, and a brace of mallard, which Horace shot as they flew across his head. One of them has dropped on the pier, the other in the water.

After the firing has ceased for some time, I emerge from my cabin. Horace and a great black-backed gull have been watching each other suspiciously for some time: the sea-gull, noticing the new-comer, drops quickly down the wind. Horace had only secured the single mallard when I came up; the birds that fell in the sea having been drifted by the tide across the channel to the margin of the nearest island,—a good hundred and fifty yards across, however.

'I'm going over,' Horace said, as I joined him. 'That's a rare merganser, I'm sure—at least I never saw the same colour of hood before.' And he began to undress.

I suggested to him that the thermometer was not much above zero, and that there was an asylum for insane people in the vicinity. Argument, however, proved unavailing; and, having undressed, he scrambled cautiously down the almost perpendicular side of the pier, and plunged into the water. 'Cold as ice,' he exclaimed, as he emerged from his dip twenty yards off.

Though the current was running strongly against him, he made way vigorously through it, and reached the opposite bank without difficulty. Some little time was consumed in collecting the dead, which had been drifted ashore at different places; and the lad had begun to look very like an over-boiled lobster (I presume the more they are boiled the redder they grow), before he returned to the point from which he was to quit the island. He swam sufficiently well; but the tide was running like a mill-race. He had been chilled during his search; and he had only one hand free,—the other being occupied by the dead birds. He struck out strongly; but when he had got about half way back, it became obvious that, unless he could put more vigour into his stroke, the current would carry him past the pier, and land him there was no saying where,—probably on a reef on which, being out of the wake of the islands and unprotected from the east, the white surf was breaking unpleasantly. He saw this himself; but he was

loath to resign the prize for which he had struggled so hardly. But, urged by our shouts and his own perception of the danger, he quickly made up his mind. Putting the neck of the merganser between his teeth, he let the others go; and then, with both hands free, fifty slow, resolute strokes, into which the whole force of his body was thrown, brought him within reach of the pier. Certain of the fisher people, who had been attracted by the shouting, helped him up the side,—not without audible expressions of astonishment at the recklessness which had ventured life and limb for 'a bird that was na fit to eat.' Horace, as with blue fingers he began his toilet, seemed in the smallest possible degree ashamed of his exploit, and began, in his easy way, an apology for himself. There was some extraordinary sort of oil he assured them, about the brute's liver, a sovereign specific for boils; and he had promised his friend Dr. Diamond to obtain it on the first opportunity. 'So you see,' he concluded, 'the Doctor would never have forgiven me had I not gone in;—had I not come out, he would have written my biography—the biography of a scientific martyr.'

The day by this time was beginning to darken; and we set off on our return, taking the fishing-village by the way. Letty had earnestly requested us to bring some eatable food back with us. But the storm had lasted for some days, and there was not a fish to be had for love or money. A few fishers were gathered together beside 'the glass,' studying its prognostications, and the look of the sky to seaward. 'It's the tail of the storm,'

said the Fleuk. 'And there's a vast of birds at the Heughs,' added the Badger. The Fleuk and the Badger, be it observed, were cousins; they are almost all cousins in these fishing villages; and probably in each village there are a dozen families of the same name; so that to avoid confusion, a system of nick-names—or *tee*-names, as they are called—is adopted; somewhat after the fashion of the North American Indians. In view of the information which the Fleuk and the Badger had volunteered, we arranged that, if the storm subsided, we should next day pay a visit to the 'Heughs,' and to the myriads of wild fowl who annually assemble there in spring.

The wind fell to a dead calm during the night; and next morning the sun rose from a tranquil sea. It was the first Spring morning,—in fact, I mean, and not by the calendar. There is always one day in the year when the Spring seems to me to awake. The snow has been gone for weeks, the sun has been shining briskly, the fruit trees are white with blossom, yet the sky remains hard and stern, and the earth is black and inhospitable, as if the thought of winter still chilled its heart. But one morning you wake unwarned, and you have barely drawn aside the curtains ere you are aware that the bonds of death are loosed, that a new life has been born into the year, and that, like the eyes of a girl who has begun to love, the blue sky and the fleecy clouds have strangely softened since nightfall. Spring is abroad upon the mountains, and her maiden whisper thrills your pulse! And this very morning (Horace confessed

as much, as we strolled together to the water-side) was the first morning of the New Year.

Many poets have welcomed the Spring; let me add to their greetings, here in passing, another greeting, by an almost unknown poet,—the mystic William Blake. It was written when he was twelve years old; yet it is little inferior in symmetry and music to some of the perfect lyrics of Tennyson's mature strength,—reminding the reader, for instance, of that lovely one which begins—

O sweet new year, delaying long, delaying long, delay no more.

But this was written before *our* laureate saw the light, —when Hayley, or such as he, wore the bays.

TO SPRING.

O thou, with dewy locks, who lookest down
Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills do tell each other, and the listening
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned
Up to thy bright pavilion; issue forth
And let thy holy feet visit our clime!

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumed garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls
Upon our love-sick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour
Thy softest kisses upon her bosom, and put
Thy golden crown upon her languish'd head
Whose modest tresses were bound up for thee.

When we reached the village we found the Fleuk and the Badger prepared to start. The Badger's winter boat had been drawn down and scrubbed, and now lay afloat at the end of the pier. Having got the Commodore and the rest of us on board, the Badger hoisted his tan-brown sail, and bore away, through the shining sea, to the 'Heughs.'

As we ran swiftly along the coast, files of divers passed us, flying north. They were on their way to breeding-places in Norway, Greenland, Labrador, where the wild note of the 'loon' is often the first sound to warn their ice-bound hunters and fishers that summer is at hand,—and we shall see nothing more of them till next October, when they will reappear by twos and threes in our bays. Night and day at this season their unwearied flight continues,—on the darkest night of spring I have heard the loon's lamentable note far overhead. 'Where does the loon go?' asked the Badger. The Fleuk had seen them among the Greenland seas. The Commodore had found their nests upon the lakes of Labrador and Canada, where 'to call a loon' is an indispensable accomplishment. He had a little volume on Labrador in his pocket, and, as the boat bowled along, he read us one or two passages upon this beautiful bird's habits in the desolate north, and the mode of hunting it which the natives adopt there. This was one of them:—

'Next morning I was awakened by the cry of a loon quite near to my tent. I seized a gun, and crept out. It was full daylight, although the sun had not yet risen.

The loons I saw floating on the bay about half a mile away; but paddling close in shore were two Nasquapes in a birch-bark canoe, with a branch of a tree in the bow. They were cautiously approaching the loons, and every now and then imitating with wonderful fidelity the cry of that wild bird. As soon as they were within two hundred yards, the man in the bow behind the branches prepared his gun, the other paddling on towards the loons, calling to them and answering their cry. The loons came forwards towards the canoe; but when within fifty yards one dived. The Indian instantly fired at another and killed it. After securing their prey, they returned to shore to give the birds time to recover themselves before they again approached them.'

'It's a skeery bird,' the Badger said, when the Commodore had concluded. 'Verra kittle to come upon in a boat, and it dives wi' the shot. The best chance is to watch him from the land; whiles he'll come close in shore after the soil, and then you maun tak him sharp the minute he rises, and afore he gathers wind for a fresh dive. They're perfect deevils at diving—ance down it's a chance if you ever see them again. Where they gang it's clean impossible to say; but they can bide under water like a sealch, I'm thinking. But do the Indian bodies eat them, sir?'

Before the Commodore could reply, the Badger's attention was suddenly diverted. A hundred yards in front of the boat a huge bird, lustrously white, sat

placidly upon the water—quite unconscious, apparently, of our near approach.

'It's a solan,' quoth the Badger, cautiously raising his gun. 'But what ails her? I never saw a solan sit like that.'

He fired as he spoke, and the great bird fell forward upon the water. The Fleuk steered us straight to the place where it lay, and the Badger, leaning over the gunnel, immediately secured it. On examining it we found that it had caught a large fish, which, covered as it was with sharp spikes or prongs, had got wedged in its throat. The bird would ultimately, no doubt, have succeeded in swallowing the fish, but meanwhile, the struggle producing a sense of suffocation, had prevented it from noticing our approach, had even, perhaps, incapacitated it for flight.

An hour's sail brought us to the 'Heughs,'—a noble bay, hemmed in on all hands by magnificent granite rocks. The sea-birds had arrived for their spring venture,—guillemots, razorbills, sea-parrots, kittiwakes, herring gulls, the raven, and the falcon. Each tribe, you see, has its own 'diggins,'—to which, year after year, it returns with unfailing regularity. The raven, who is the earliest comer, often beginning his architectural operations before the winter is well over, builds its nest far up on some slippery and utterly inaccessible ledge. The peregine selects a crevice in the Bloody Hole, which looks quite as 'ugly' as the other; but is in reality accessible to skilful and steady-eyed cragsmen, of whom there are several among our fisher friends.

The faces of the bluffs on which the sea-wind beats most fiercely, are covered with the gaily-coloured eggs of marrots and razorbills. The kittiwakes keep a sheltered nook to themselves, while the great herring-gulls, who sweep majestically overhead, observing us with curious eyes, are in possession of every 'splintered pinnacle.' The rock-pigeon builds in the deep recesses of the caves, along with the cormorant and the shag. The nests of both of the latter birds (the fact has been sometimes doubted) are found frequently along this coast; but placed as they are, within the eaves of the caves, it is difficult to reach them, and the young are seldom captured.

As we approach, we notice the rabbits scampering about among the long grasses and the wild garlic, and here and there a goat is visible, tethered, as it appears, on the summit of the precipice. A troubled murmur passes across the crowded ranks of coot and razorbill that are ranged along the faces of the bluff. Then they begin to discover that it is time to move; a stream of birds, long-bodied and short-winged, passes over our heads to seaward; some of them take the water; but the majority, after a sweeping circuitous flight, return to their respective stations, and await the issue with that stolid calmness which characterises the puffin race. The snow-white kittiwakes hover over us, or dart rapidly and clamorously upon the shoals of 'soil,' with which the sea at this season swarms. But we leave razorbills and kittiwakes undisturbed. We are in search of the rock-pigeon, and the Dropping Cave,

which we are nearing, is one of its favourite haunts. Quietly, without a word spoken, we enter the magnificent portal,—for this sea-temple, scooped out of the solid rock by the winds and the waves of a thousand winters, is more awful than any that man has built on the land. When we are fairly within its mouth, the Fleuk and the Badger raise their voices, and beat their oars on the side of the boat. Startled by the noise, a flock of blue pigeons, sprinkled with white, issues out of the gloomy darkness, where the noise of falling water and the occasional plunge of a seal is audible, and make for 'the open.' Then the guns are discharged simultaneously, producing such thunder as a whole park of artillery makes elsewhere, and waking echoes, and echoes of echoes, that seem never to cease,—for often, when you fancy that all is over, some distant bluff takes up the challenge, and of new breaks the silence. The rock-pigeon is a difficult bird to shoot under such circumstances,—it flies rapidly, the cave-light is imperfect, and the roll of the boat is apt to unsteady the hand. When the smoke clears away, however, we find that one or two have fallen; and a similar success attends us at the Mermaid and the Suitor caves, which we attack in succession.

The Commodore is anxious to add the eggs of the black guillemot to his collection, and the Badger knows where the single pair which frequent the 'Heughs' have this year established their nest. The Scrath Rock is one of the wildest and most picturesque in the world. A solid mass of granite, two hundred feet in height, and

one thousand feet in circumference, is divided from the main land by a deep and narrow channel. This immense block has been rent in twain,—how, when, or by what dread Titanic hand, no mortal can tell. The rent, which widens as it ascends, is bridged at the top; and through this great natural arch (forming as it were a mighty frame which intensifies by its deep carmine the purity of the sea and sky in the vignette which it encloses), the blue water and the white sails of passing ships sparkle brilliantly. Half way down its slippery and polished face the pair of 'duskies' had established themselves, and we could see them flitting, like black butterflies, about the rock. They had selected, as it seemed, a secure and inaccessible recess; but the Badger, who had been a mighty cragsman in his youth, and who was yet wiry and agile, was not daunted. He landed upon the island, and quickly reached the summit (for the ascent was comparatively safe and easy), where he relieved himself of boots and jacket. Then he cautiously lowered himself over the face, and crawled along on his belly, snake like, in the direction of the nest. We scarcely dared to follow him with our eyes,—it made one sick and giddy merely to look at him. See, he has reached the nest, and now he prepares to return. As he does so, a mass of rock which he had disturbed as he descended is dislodged, and passing within a yard of the ledge to which he clings, leaps from one projection to another, till, with a noise like thunder, it buries itself in the sea. Had he gone a yard further, it would have taken him with it; even as it is, it leaves a wide gap

which might task the skill of a sinewy leaper on *terra firma;* and here a sheer precipice, one hundred and fifty feet in height, yawns beneath. But the Badger's shoeless feet cling like a hawk's or a squirrel's to the cliff, and in another moment—for he dare not give himself a moment to realise the extremity of the peril—he has crossed the gulf and is safe. So are the eggs in his cap, (he has carried it between his teeth all the time),—forthwith taken possession of by the Commodore, who looks, however, I fancy, as if in his opinion they had nearly cost too much.

And now we prepare to return,—for the light of the early spring afternoon begins to fail, and the breeze moans mournfully among the deserted and darkening caves. All day we have been, as it were, cut off from any fellowship with our fellow-creatures,—for no hut or sheiling is visible among these desolate rocks. But now, as we gain the offing, the towers of a great sea-keep are visible on the farthest crag, and, in the sheltered ravine below, the ruins of an ancient abbey. Here the great House of Comyn lived,—here their bones rest.

> The castle for their stormy life,
> The convent for its close;
> That with battle and bloodshed rife,
> This keeping for them, who were done with strife,
> Shelter and long repose.

And then the Commodore,—as the boat rushed swiftly through the freshening swell before the keen breeze of

the coming night,—began a yarn about the kingly Comyns, and some fair, far-off Beatrix or Muriel,—for these old Scotch nobles gave their pretty daughters even prettier names,—whose pathetic love-story still keeps her memory sweet.

VI.

LADY GRISEL.

LETTY and I went to the Roman Catholic chapel last Sunday. It is prettily situated on the brow of the Raven's Craig; the music is good; the light rich and dim; the view from the terrace, in spring-time—over land and sea, and the blushing hawthorn hedges—very glorious.

There are times when the gloom of a Catholic shrine is favourable to devotional feeling. Letty, when at home, is often the least little bit of an unbeliever—a charming rebel. But to-day, while the mournful notes of the Stabat Mater fretted the narrow aisle, and violet and purple dyes streamed through the stained glass upon the upturned face of the kneeling girl, I saw that earnest, rapt expression which sometimes gathers into the dreamy eyes of the mystic. It is at these times that the invisible comes near to us. At these times we are able to rise above the fellowships of sense, and to behold, beyond the smoke of the incense and the gloom of the sanctuary, the vision of a martyred God.

But the fit does not last long—we quickly return to

earth. Earth is our mother—or at least our foster-mother—and she does all she can, as the poet has said, to obscure the glories of our ancestry, and to divide us from the heritage to which we were born. I cannot say that on this day the discourse of the good priest—Father Eustace, they called him—did much to prolong the sway of the unseen. Yet the idea of his discourse—a sort of heathen *Io Pæan* in a Christian church—was fine, and it was worked out with no inconsiderable skill. We are actors, it said, in a great and sombre tragedy. We are marching onwards—ever onwards—to Death. The Grave is before us. This is no light Bacchanalian dance on which we have entered. It is a solemn procession, marshalled by a Divine, omnipotent leader, conducting to a sure but mysterious ending. Why, then, O my brothers! why, then, turn it into a comedy or a farce? You may strive to do so,—you may drape it in grotesque attire, and play those fantastic tricks before high heaven that make the angels weep,—but it remains what God has designed it to be; you cannot escape from its grave conditions and its dire solemnities. When we know that each one of us has to undergo this cruel ordeal—this mysterious fate—why vex our souls with ambition? why weary our hearts with love? Be sure that we shall need every faculty we possess,—braced and nerved as a warrior's in battle,—to meet with courage the bitter doom which most certainly awaits us. Let us rather take hands, my brothers; let us take hands, and, with resolved and sober mien, go forth to greet the inevitable,—not without

psalms, and lofty misereres, and a chanted chorus, if you will.

Not Christian it may be; yet more than heathen in its wail of triumph. So Letty and I went home in a dream. From this exalted mood we were quickly awakened. We had barely reached the highroad on our return, when we were overtaken by Lady Betty and Lady Grisel. We confessed where we had been. Lady Betty was scandalised at our perversion, and made covert allusions to the scarlet woman, and the little horn, and the great bear, and the seven vials, and the seven-and-twenty candlesticks. But Lady Grisel took the matter with perfect composure. 'Hoots, Betty!' she remarked, 'let sleepin' dogs lie. They might gang farther, and fare waur. I'm sure MacWhirter is as dry as a whunbush.' This was an 'aside' for Lady Betty, who sat under MacWhirter, and waited for his millennium.

My dear Lady Grisel, how can I do justice to the kindest of hearts and the roughest of tongues? One has said of you elsewhere, 'A charming old lady, one of the finest specimens of the ancient Scottish gentlewoman. She is as neat, as natty, as daintily dressed (though the dress be made after another fashion) as her granddaughters; and her eyes, which have seen seventy summers, are nearly as bright as theirs, and disclose a fund of shrewd intelligence and sarcastic life. She belongs, in fact, to an earlier matronhood—a matronhood of vigorous actors and vigorous speakers—a matronhood which witnessed a good deal of hard living and hard drinking and hard swearing, without being prudishly

scandalised. I fear, indeed, that the good old soul is a bit of a heathen at heart. She feels, at least—and sometimes sharply expresses—an immense contempt for sons and grandsons (though she loves "the lads," too, in her way) who want to elevate the lower classes and to teach them sobriety and continence; who do not swear like troopers, and who cannot take their claret like the men of her rosy youth.' True, every word of it; but it is right to remind those who do not know her, that her directness of speech, and somewhat easy morals, are things that belong to the outside, and that there is a sound heart and high principle behind. That she is 'the soul of honour,' every one knows (and one comes unconsciously to measure her by a masculine standard), though she would venture a good deal, I can believe, for the reputation of the house to which she belongs. There was a sublimity of self-sacrifice in the view of the old gentlewoman who proposed to hide the disgrace of a kinsman by a pious fraud—'But you will lose your soul, madam!' 'Tush! what signifies my poor silly soul, compared with the honour of the family?' —to which, on a pinch, Lady Grisel could rise. She is perfectly fearless; to her own moral code she owes religious obedience: that of any other authority, natural or supernatural, she treats with tacit disrespect. She is in these, and certain other respects, not without democratic leanings; but, upon the whole, her religious and political persuasion may be defined by the German epigram: 'Depend upon it, sir, God thinks twice before damning a man of that quality.'

It is curious to notice with what composure, I had almost said complacency, these elderly people contemplate the approach of death. We have all heard the story of the old lady dying during a tempestuous night: 'Ech, sirs! what a nicht for me to be fleein' through the air!' And only the other day I heard of a well-known north-countryman, who, on his death-bed, after being told that he had only a few hours to live, asked, with perfect composure, and a twinkle of the old humour in his eye, 'Whar think you, Betty, will I be this time the morn?' 'I'll be off my perch to-night,' were the last words of a great thinker who died the other day,—looking out calmly into the darkness. Lady Grisel is always looking forward to her decease, in which she takes the interest of a survivor. 'Be sure you ask Sandy,' she said, on the occasion of her last severe illness, when arranging the details of her funeral; 'it 'll be a fine ploy for Sandy—he likes a ploy.' While I was walking through our churchyard with her, one day last year, she stopped before three mounds, that formed, as it were, three sides of a square, and seemed to be engaged in inward prayer, for her lips moved and there was moisture in her eyes. The graves were those of the late doctor and parson of the parish, and of an old East Indian—noted whist-players in their day. 'There they are,' she remarked, placidly, after a long pause, 'the auld rubber—just waitin' for me to cut in.'

The old ladies descended from their rather primitive conveyance, which, with 'Tinker,' was consigned to the charge of their grand-niece 'Bell'—a pretty girl who

accompanied them, and of whom (as one of my two heroines) more anon. Lady Betty took possession of Letty, to whom she confided her anxieties about the candlesticks; I lingered behind with Lady Grisel. She is one of the best talkers I know; and in these emasculated days, her strong sense and keen tongue, with its lingering touch of Doric—for, like one or two of her contemporaries in this remote district, she maintains the old tongue with a certain old-fashioned pride—are as effective as a tonic.

'Betty wants Horace to marry our Bell,' she began. 'But I love not the law, and my nephew, Lord Dunbog, tell't me at last circuit that Horace had not paid for his wig yet—out of his savin's, I mean. And Lettice has been settin' her cap at him, they say. Well, she's verra welcome—I wish her joy o' the lad.' Bell's grand-aunt is reasonably jealous of *our* Letty. 'Not that I'm for folk waiting to marry till they're doited. I was jimp eighteen when I took the laird, and a braw couple we were, sir, when we left the kirk; though you may pit it down to the pride and vanity o' threescore years and ten. But the young men noo are uncommin' canny: they keep to their clubs, and read their papers, and they tak' up wi' ballet girls and sic like, and they'll no drink claret except at a ransom, and it follows that they canna afford to marry, and so they turn nice honest girls into dreech auld maids like Betty, and fa' themselves, year after year, into graceless, heartless, toothless sinners—at odds baith wi' God and man. Dinna suppose I'm speakin' at you—doubtless you would ha' married lang

syne if ony decent lass had gaen you the chance. Ye'll ha' heard,' she continued, 'o' the mischeef we'e had at the Castle, wi' our table-maid Kirsty Henderson? It's clean upset Betty. Kirsty's had a misfortune, as it's caed, and a bonny mess she's made of it. She came to me yestreen wi' her head in her apron. I could not believe my ears, for she's a downright fright. "Kirsty Henderson," I said, "It 's not possible. An ill-fa'ured limmer like you! Wha in the name of mercy's the father o' the wean?" "Indeed, my leddy," quoth the impudent hussy, in a bleeze at the notion, "I could hae got plenty o' feythers."'

The tone of the narrative reminded me of another in which (with what justice I know not) Lady Grisel is made sometimes to figure. In the Manse of the parish where her husband's property was situated, the clergyman had a fine engraving from a picture of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Lady Grisel called at the Manse one day, and after a look at the picture, with which she was greatly pleased, for the fair Egyptian was represented as very beautiful, she turned to the minister, and, with naïve simplicity and a touch of adorable astonishment, inquired—'*What ailed the fallow at her?*'

Here we were joined by Lady Betty, who had left Lettice to discuss a new bonnet with Bell.

'Grisel has told you of our trouble,' said Lady Betty, rushing into the conversation, and holding up her hands in devout reprobation. 'I never thought much of the lass; but it 's a warning to each of us. Satan goes

about like a roaring lion; and who can say which of us may be the next?'

'Dinna lippen to him, Betty,' the elder sister sarcastically replied, 'though neither you nor me is like to be tried. A pair o' daft auld wives we would be, Betty,'—Lady Betty tried to interpose ineffectually. 'Of course, of course, I ken what you wad say. But I whiles fancy that the deil is not so black as he's painted. If MacWhirter is clear that there is a deil, I canna presume to interfere—he kens best. But I ha' thocht at odd times that the deil is at worst but a feckless sort of body—a queer notion o' the auld Papish idolaters. What's the good o' laying the mischeef at his door! There's sma' need o' a deil in a world where there are deceitfu' hearts and leein' tongues—except to gie MacWhirter a handle. Leastwise it's cowardly to pit a' doon to the account o' an unfortunate, but, it may be, inoffensive speerit.'

VII.

WHY WE TOOK DOWN THE SUN.

AN aged elm stands on the brink of the tiny rivulet which forms the nominal boundary between the grounds of the Lodge and the Cottage orchard. A slight rustic seat clasps its knotted trunk. A pleasant resting-place in summer, when the fierce light beats through the branches; or in autumn, when the yellow leaves fall with a gentle rustle upon the open volume over which the student bends. Even in winter, wrapped in a huge bearskin coat, with a pipe of Cavendish in your cheek, and seated on the lee-side (and as the seat quite encircles the tree, you can always keep the bole between you and 'the airt of the wind'), the spot is one where you can sit for an hour and listen to the chirping of the sparrows among the leafless hedges without being actually frozen. I was seated here the other morning, with a small volume of Essays beside me, written by a man for whose character and for whose powers I entertain profound admiration. He is a great theologian and a true poet, and he writes a style that is at once philosophically subtle and richly imaginative. Out of Jeremy

Taylor I know few passages in English ecclesiastical literature that can bear comparison with certain passages in these Essays. His invective is sometimes as gorgeous as Dryden's satire. I do not know precisely to what sect he belongs; but no one can read these eloquent vindications of the Christian life without feeling that he is at heart, if not in name, a Christian. I had been reading one of the noblest essays in the book,—a critical, poetical, and metaphysical estimate of Theodore Parker's Theology, rich in imaginative invective and bold logic,—when I was interrupted by the Doctor.

'Ah!' he exclaimed, looking at the volume which I laid down as he approached, 'You had better take care what you are about. If our Synod find you reading James Martineau aloud, they will burn you in the Grass Market.'

'But I thought you had given over burning people in the Grass Market?' I said innocently.

'Well, we had for a year or two; but we are going to take to it again. Great is the devil, and great are his works, and we must make a stand at once, or go to the wall. So we have had our thumb-screws oiled, and we mean to try them immediately on unbelievers like yourself. We'll see if we can't put the truth on its legs again.'

'My heresies are not very extensive; I only hold with Dryden—Dryden is it not?

> Divines can say but what themselves believe,
> Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative;

> For were all sure, then all sides would agree,
> And Faith itself be lost in certainty.
> To live uprightly, then, is sure the best;
> To save ourselves, and not to damn the rest.'

'Mind you don't end as Dryden did,' replied the Doctor,—

> 'And Her alone for my director take,
> Whom Thou hast promised never to forsake.

Extremes meet, and the Laodicean, they say, makes a first-rate inquisitor.'

I knew that he spoke in irony, but I answered him, 'What would you have? who am I that I should judge my brother? who am I to condemn my neighbour? I hope and trust that I am right; but in this world absolute certainty is a dream.'

'You will never be a missionary, a crusader, the herald of a new faith. Think you the Moslem would have overrun the East, like a fiery plague, had he rested on a mere "balance of probabilities"? had the first Christians been unconvinced that God had spoken directly to their souls, would Paganism have fallen? It needs a faith of a firmer and closer texture than yours to conquer the world.'

'It may be: but if the belief be false, it is as well perhaps for all parties that it should fail to conquer. Butler ridicules that "inner light" which has instigated every form of persecution. We are appealing to the poets,—you recollect what he says?

For what bigot could ever draw
By inward light a deed in law?
Or could hold forth by revelation
An answer to a declaration?

I do not say that his ridicule or his logic is just. I do not say that a man may not be thoroughly persuaded in his own mind. I say only that in this world—looking to the conditions under which the mind works—we can never be entitled to force our convictions upon other people.'

'Well, of course, I agree with you,' the Doctor said, dropping his tone of irony, and resuming his natural tone. 'But these Thugs do try a man's patience, especially if he hasn't much of the commodity.'

'And who are the Thugs?' I inquired.

The Doctor thereupon proceeded to sketch the position, moral, social, and ecclesiastical, of the Thug.

'The British, like the Indian, Thug, holds that, in religion as in war, any stratagem is justifiable. He strangles his adversaries whenever he gets the chance. Being on "the Lord's side" he is entitled to use weapons which could not be decently used in a secular contest. He scatters foul epithets, and attributes base motives, in a lofty spirit of Christian forbearance. The world may occasionally denounce "the calumniator," but "he is prepared to suffer in his Master's cause;" and meekly bowing his head, he repeats with variations the original offence. In the old times it happened once or twice that these men rose up in force, and took pos-

session of the government for the purpose of carrying into practice their own religious ideas. They were to hold no truce with the powers of evil. Whoever did not agree with their theological system was accursed, and was to be treated after the fashion in which the Israelites treated the Canaanites. North of the border, the Covenanters, south of the border, the Puritans, represented the chosen people. Fortunately the leader of the fanatics united with his zeal, rare common sense, a courageous moderation, and tolerably clear notions of political expediency. He humoured while he restrained, and his iron but healing hand kept the passions of his followers within decent bounds. Since then they have never again succeeded in wresting the reins of government out of the hands of lay statesmen; but, except that it has undergone an inevitable process of deterioration, the spirit of the chosen people remains unchanged. The nineteenth-century Thug, though but a sorry representative of the men who won Cromwell's battles, continues to occupy substantially the same ground. He sees the same distinct line of demarcation between the people of God and the people of the devil. He belongs to the elect; he has been rescued from the eternal wrath which awaits a guilty world. The men of that world he cannot now shoot down, or burn, or imprison, or torture; but he can separate himself from them, he can speak evil things of all who wander across the line, of all who venture to preach charity and brotherly kindness, of all who enjoy the world which God has made, or who em-

ploy the faculties with which he has endowed them.* Malice, hatred, uncharitableness, the petty animosities of ignoble minds, are ugly things, but though the Fifth Monarchy man was a much more heroic figure, I am not sorry,' quoth the Doctor, 'that the zeal of the chosen people is now forced to spend itself in religious newspapers and May meetings.

Thus the Doctor. On subsequent occasion he explained his grievances at greater length. The Thugs, it appeared, had laid siege to our city. Let me essay to describe briefly, with or without the aid of the Muses, the varying fortunes of the field, and the prowess of the combatants who had embarked in this new crusade.

Skim-Milk—I think that is what they call it—is, as its name indicates, a monthly publication of a very harmless description. It was established to compete with periodicals that were neither harmless nor nutritious—that were, on the contrary, poisonous in the extreme. Since its establishment, *Gin-and-water*—its most formidable rival—has lost three-fourths of its supporters. Having been conducted, however, with good feeling and good sense, it has incurred the hostility of those ecclesiastical Thugs who have little of either. Against this poor little bantling a succession of fierce anathemas have been launched.

* Leigh Hunt, remarking on those who are selfishly and sordidly occupied in securing 'a good place' in the world to come—'saving each man his own dirty love for himself,' as some one in 'Westward Ho!' observes—felicitously compares 'worldliness' with 'other-worldliness.'

First of all we had a meeting of our Ecclesiastical Council, where it was resolved, that as *Skim-Milk* was a dangerous and destructive publication, it should be burned at the Town Cross by an ecclesiastical functionary—the beadle. I cannot say that I gathered what special danger was to be apprehended from its circulation; but the popular notion appeared to be that the enemy of mankind had taken to writing in its pages. He had invented the novel, and now he was turning his attention to general literature. He had become a contributor to the periodicals. He was a British Essayist. It cannot be said that writing for the monthlies is a lively occupation, even for a devil. Mephistopheles, who flirted with any pretty, saucy, young witch who came in his way, showed better taste, and spent his leisure much more profitably. Of course the Enemy may have reasons of his own, of which he is the best judge. A devil in a state of destitution cannot afford to be nice.

> Folk maun do something for their bread,
> And sae maun Death.

Then, no doubt, he experiences a certain feeling of novelty in writing for a religious miscellany, edited by a Doctor of Divinity! One would have liked some further particulars. Which are his articles? Does he sign his papers? Is he illustrated by Millais? Or does he try his hand at the poetry? which unquestionably is devilish bad.

Then one morning we found the walls of Hazeldean

plastered over with enormous placards printed in blue and crimson characters. Sissy, beholding them from afar, believed that a new wizard or a new menagerie had made its appearance, and her soul rejoiced. On closer inspection, however, it appeared that the placards were merely intended to direct public attention (primo) to the republication of a series of articles on *Skim-Milk*, which had appeared in the columns of *Christian Charity* (as it is called); and (secundo) to the fact that

THE CONVERTED CHIMNEY-SWEEP

would, D.V., preach on the same subject, in connection with the text, 'What concord hath Christ with Belial?' (A collection at the door to defray expenses.) On the following morning, Sandy, our letter-carrier, brought with him a copy of the republished articles for the Doctor, and another for myself,—the copies having been kindly posted for us (they had forgotten to pay the postage) by some unknown admirer of both parties. I cannot undertake to reproduce this manifesto in full; but some of the passages are so exceedingly characteristic, that I shall take the trouble to copy them in a foot note.*

* 'It has often been our lot,' said *Christian Charity*, 'to have to stand forth and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, against churches, individuals, and periodicals. This, we can honestly say, has been the least pleasant part of our work. But unswerving faithfulness to the integrity of God's saving truth, and sincere love for the souls of men, were solemn considerations, to which all others have been held subordinate.

The copy of this document, now in my possession, is scribbled over by the Doctor. His jottings are not

We never set ourselves more unwillingly to a task of this sort than to this review of *Skim-Milk*— a task, we can assure our friends, which was none of our seeking. But mothers have written to us, have sent us copies of the magazine, and have asked us: "Is it fit to be put into our children's hands?" And we have been obliged to answer, with tears in our eyes, "Alas! no; it is fitter for the fire." Not of our seeking was the task; but we had not proceeded far before we felt that we had not begun a day too soon; for it is clear that *Skim-Milk* is doing about as dangerous a work as any journal of the present day. Most painful is it for us to be compelled to make these remarks; but we are only giving utterance to the feelings which permeate the hearts of Christian men and women when the name of this periodical crops up. This is all,' *Christian Charity* continued, after a prolonged criticism on a little moral story for children, written by the editor of *Skim-Milk*, 'that the writer, though to be sure it is only a passing allusion, has to tell us about the Atonement. What about God's holiness; and what about the vindication and satisfaction of His justice; and what about His holy displeasure against sin; and what about the substitution of the Just One for the unjust? It is needless to say more on this topic; for it is to be very particularly noted that it is not so much what we can quote, as what we cannot quote, on which we build. But this is not all. On turning the page we find a contributor recommending shooting, fishing, cricket, golf, and festive parties for young people. Only think of this. Sure are we that the advice contained in those articles on *Beginning Life*, as they are called, is most pernicious. He who begins life trusting to such a guide, will make but a miserable ending of it in this world, and will have a fearful beginning of life in that which is to come. Then a dignitary of our church informs his readers that there are many gates to heaven. Might he not have said at once that Pagan and Papist idolaters have a chance of sitting

particularly intelligible,—being rather energetic than coherent. 'Tartuffe,' 'Mawworm,' 'Pecksniff,' 'Cur,' 'Calumniator,' are among the more prominent of these annotations. To myself the document is a curious and instructive one; in a literary point of view it is of course below criticism; but it represents with tolerable fidelity the tone of sentiment, the vein of thought, of a not inconsiderable section of our society. This section, though illiterate, is ambitious and industrious; it aims at dominion; it aspires to govern; it may be worth while, therefore, to dwell for a little upon the moral and intellectual peculiarities which it discloses.

'All reformations of religion,' says Samuel Butler, 'seldom extend further than the mere opinions of men. The amendment of their lives and conversations are equally unregarded by all Churches, how muchsoever they differ in doctrine and discipline. And though all the reformation our Saviour preached to the world was only repentance and amendment of life, without taking any notice at all of men's opinions and judgments, yet all the Christian Churches take the contrary course, and believe religion more concerned in our erroneous opinions

down in the kingdom of God? A lower depth, however, than we have yet sounded remains. A recent number contains a secular poem by Adelaide Proctor, and a secular story by Anthony Trollope! We must make a firm stand against these insidious proceedings; we must take heed to the thin end of the wedge. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." And so we gladly close our unwelcome task, which nothing but a sense of duty to the truth of God, and the God of the truth, could have induced us to undertake.'

than in all the most inhuman and impious actions in the world.' It is now as it was in the days of Butler. The members of the Christian Church are still preoccupied with the opinions of men, and precision of belief continues to be considered of more moment than purity of heart. They tell us, or at least they lead us to believe, that the moral life in the judgment of God is of inferior and subordinate value, and that a man's eternal condition is determined by the intellectual relation which he bears to a certain set of doctrines. They are rather inclined, indeed, to resent the presence of the merely secular virtues. Whatever is not of faith is of sin. A man who is meek, charitable, forgiving, upright, pure in deed and thought, but who leans to the Roman Catholic or Unitarian communion, is as obviously a child of wrath as the veriest drunkard or blasphemer. A clear-headed friend of mine once shocked an ecclesiastical tribunal by refusing to admit that 'the good actions' of the unconverted are displeasing to God!

Forty years ago, Audubon, the distinguished American naturalist, was pursuing his vocation in a wild, remote, and, as he believed, perfectly uninhabited district of Labrador. Rising up from the bare ground, after a cold night's rest, he beheld on one of the granite rocks which strew that desolate plain, the form of a man accurately outlined against the dawn, his head raised to heaven, his hands clasped and beseeching. Before this rapt and imploring figure stood a small monument of unhewn stones, supporting a wooden cross. The only

dweller on that inhospitable shore had come out from his hut to the open air, that, without barrier or hindrance, his solitary supplication might go up directly unto Him who does not dwell in the temples that are made with hands.

A pathetic scene!—recalling the fine words of the poet,—

> For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

Had the writer of the manifesto, however, witnessed this simple and affecting act of worship, we know how he would have regarded it. 'You are engaged in God's worship, you say?' the hard metallic voice glibly exclaims; 'but what about God's holiness; and what about the vindication and satisfaction of His justice; and what about His holy displeasure against sin; and what about the substitution of the Just One for the unjust?' Alas! for him—

> Who kneels remote upon the simple sod,
> And sues *in formâ pauperis* to God,—

when he is confronted by a theological pugilist,—an ecclesiastical Heenan or Sayers. I am afraid that he would hardly have presence of mind, or knowledge of the world enough, to reply,—'My friend, one of the sorrowfullest sights ever witnessed in this world, is the effort which honest men have sometimes made to measure out the love of God into earthen cisterns, to cramp His truth within the narrow enclosures of human logic. But if this be true, what shall we say of the man who does not see that those enclo-

sures are in a sense logically constructed; who does not apprehend what his sectarian watchwords really mean, but only repeats them, parrot-like, because they are the commonplaces of the sect to which he belongs? Such a man is an eyesore to the truth, for he is unsound and rotten to the very core.'

Nor is this the darkest side of the picture. Such a nature is profoundly irreverent. A dull, hard, narrow metallic understanding is incapable of that reverential humility, which is the natural posture of the greatest and highest intellects. On the contrary, a man of this stamp is inveterately confident. He betrays the closest and most intimate acquaintance with the counsels of Omnipotence. He appropriates the Almighty. He is on the Lord's side; his adversaries—people who love their neighbours, ecclesiastical or otherwise, but who do not love ecclesiastical tyranny in any shape or disguise—are leagued with the devil. He and his brethren are 'the people of God,' in the same partial sense, let us hope, that the tailors of Tooley Street are the people of England. With bowed head, with uncovered feet, with beating heart—as Moses approached the Burning Bush—do the holiest of men approach the mystery of the crucifixion. Whereas the theological scribe, whose heart has been hardened by doctrinal controversy, whose conscience, beaten upon by the winds and waves of verbal strife, has lost its natural sensitiveness, is as glib and confident as a village showman. 'Walk in, ladies and gentlemen, walk in,—the celebrated Asian mystery fully explained by a professor of logic. Just about to

begin,—a reduction allowed to families and schools.' There is a passage of passionate and scathing invective, which the readers of *Modern Painters* must remember —a passage which one sometimes feels inclined to apply to him who defiles the shrine into which he dares to venture. 'Bandinelli,'—this is Mr. Ruskin's observation,—'*Bandinelli puts a scent of common flesh about his marble Christ.*'

It can occasion no surprise that the type of human life which these people select for our imitation should be of the narrowest and most shrivelled sort. The fairest flowers of the heart and of the imagination are stupidly plucked up, are ruthlessly trampled upon. Their *index expurgatorius* is more extensive than that kept at the Vatican. Tennyson is 'unsound.' Thackeray, Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Victor Hugo, are forbidden fruit. From Rosalind and her grave and merry sisters; from Meg Merrilies, and Jeanie Deans, and Rebecca, and Saunders Mucklebacket; from the wonderful study of the noble yet doubting Savanarola, which the author of *Romola* has made for us, the ascetic averts his eyes. These, and such as these, are the offspring of the secular imagination, and lie outside the straight and narrow path to which the believer is confined. The healthy animalism of youth is sternly repressed. The manly games of English school-life, the 'festive parties' of boys and maidens, are greeted with such a shudder as the lady felt when she looked on Comus and his crew. 'I went weeping to bed,' Heine says, 'and in the night dreamed that all the fair flower-

gardens and green meadows of the world were rolled up and put away like carpets and baize from the floor, and that a beadle climbed up on a high ladder and took down the sun.' A nice place the beadles would make of it, were they allowed to have their own way.

I am willing that the ascetic should amputate his own limbs, if the operation affords him any sensible gratification; but I confess that my indignation is roused when I find him experimenting upon the limbs of others. There is nothing in this world more lovely than the innocent happiness of children. But even into its flowery fields the monastic misanthrope forces his way. He casts his shadow across their pure hearts; he touches their simple talk with his gloomy metaphors. A wise and liberal-minded clergyman told me the other day that he had been conversing recently with a Sunday-school girl, the model scholar of the flock. This was the dialogue which took place:—

Clergyman (in a friendly conversational tone).—'Where were you born, my dear?'

Child.—'In sin.'

Clergyman.—'No, no; I don't mean that. But, let me see, whose child are you?'

Child.—'The child of wrath.'

To such a pass had this little maiden been brought. She had been fetched away from 'paidling' in the burn, or plucking cowslips in the hedge-rows, to be planted in a theological nursery. Her progress was no doubt highly creditable; yet some may fancy that the simple sweetness and innocent artlessness of girlhood are ill

exchanged for the dry bones of a theological system, and the uncouth phraseology of a traditionary creed.*

* These wise and weighty words by John Stuart Mill deserve to be attentively pondered:

'According to the Calvinistic theory, the one great offence of man is Self-will. All the good of which humanity is capable is comprised in Obedience. You have no choice: thus you must do, and no otherwise: "whatever is not a duty is a sin." Human nature being radically corrupt, there is no redemption for any one until human nature is killed within him. To one holding this theory of life, crushing out any of the human faculties, capacities, and susceptibilities is no evil; man needs no capacity, but that of surrendering himself to the will of God; and if he uses any of his faculties for any other purpose but to do that supposed will more effectually, he is better without them. That is the theory of Calvinism; and it is held in a mitigated form by many who do not consider themselves Calvinists, the mitigation consisting in giving a less ascetic interpretation to the alleged will of God; asserting it to be His will that mankind should gratify some of their inclinations—of course, not in the manner they themselves prefer, but in the way of obedience, that is, in a way prescribed to them by authority, and therefore, by the necessary conditions of the case, the same for all.

'In some such invidious form there is at present a strong tendency to this narrow theory of life, and to the pinched and hide-bound type of human character which it patronises. Many persons, no doubt, sincerely think that human beings thus cramped and dwarfed are as their Maker designed them to be; just as many have thought that trees are a much finer thing when clipped into pollards, and cut out into figures of animals, than as nature made them. But if it be any part of religion to believe that man was made by a good Being, it is more consistent with that faith to believe that this Being gave all human faculties that they might be cultivated and unfolded, not rooted out and consumed; and that He takes delight in every nearer approach

If our ascetics (or our beadles, if we adopt the phraseology that Heine prefers) would leave the sun in his place on six days of the week, they would certainly take him down on the seventh. Why he rises at all, indeed, on that morning, why the grass grows, why the flowers open their petals, why the bee makes her comb, or the lark builds her nest, on the Sabbath day, are facts which obviously require a good deal of explanation. Nature, in the view of my particular beadle, is bound to appear in a suit of sackcloth and ashes once a week. But nature, somehow, declines to accept the beadle's explanation of the universe; and, in reply, he turns his back upon her, and shuts the vestry-door upon her serene and happy face. Her smiles and her tears do not move him. He is as insensible to her frowns as to her caresses. A yellow primrose is a yellow primrose, and there's an end of it.

Our Hazeldean beadle has been very active of late. Soon after the circulation of the document on which I

made by His creatures to the ideal conception embodied in them, every increase in any of their capabilities of comprehension, of action, or of enjoyment. There is a different type of excellence from the Calvinistic—a conception of humanity as having its nature bestowed on it for other purposes than merely to be abnegated. "Pagan self-assertion" is one of the elements of human worth, as well as "Christian self-denial." There is a Greek idea of self-development which the Platonic and Christian ideal of self-government blends with, but does not supersede. It may be better to be a John Knox than an Alcibiades, but it is better to be a Pericles than either; nor would a Pericles, if we had one in these days, be without anything good which belonged to John Knox.'—(*On Liberty*. By J. S. Mill, p. 111.)

have been commenting, a fleet of armed vessels visited our waters. We are sea-birds by nature and training, and we take a just pride in that navy in which the honour of England is embarked. So we all flocked down to look for once upon the gallant ships. The gentlefolks, of course, went on any day, from Monday to Saturday inclusive, that suited them; our working men and women and children, who do not happen to have much spare time on hand, were pleased to devote the Sunday afternoon to this purpose. As Coriolanus fluttered the Volscians in Corioli, so did the vice-admiral of the fleet flutter the beadles in Hazeldean. They stood in the highways, on the warm summer afternoon, arrayed in their robes of office, and lifted up their testimony against a backsliding people. But their zeal did not meet with any reward; they might as well have preached to the stones. The scene reminded one forcibly of the scene described in the old ballad:—

> Hech sic a parish, hech sic a parish,
> Hech sic a parish as Little Dunkeld,
> They hae sticket the minister, hang'd the precentor,
> Dung down the steeple, and drucken the bell!

But beadledom had its revenge. Every one who knows Hazeldean must remember the pleasant gardens where the dark days of winter keep a summer fragrance, where trees of strange growth transport the spectator to the shores of the Pacific, where the lotus and the myrtle, where the cactus and the palm-tree, grow side by side. The nation does well to provide such outdoor schools:

the people who go there learn not merely botany and the scientific names of flowers and plants, but awe, humility, reverence,—reverence for the wonderful works of God, and for Him who is their designer. It does well, moreover, to leave them open all the week round, so that the poorest and the busiest man may have at least a chance, when the week's work is done, of listening to the story which they repeat, to the moral which they enforce. Everywhere else, therefore, are these gardens open upon the first day of the week; in Hazeldean alone the beadle keeps the keys, and locks the people out. It is no good to tell him, 'We do not ask you to walk there yourself; if you do not wish to look upon green trees and bright flowers, we shall not compel you to do so; but as we are anxious to see for ourselves, and to show our children what they contain, on the only day when we and they are not engaged at the mills, do not come in the way and bar our entrance.' But the whole army of beadles was roused; there was a great denouncing of God's judgments; the Commination Service was read at length; our governors, who are getting up in life, and are disposed to Rest and be Thankful for the luck which has left them where they are, who are pleasant genial gentlemen, and do not wish to make themselves or others uneasy by standing out for what they call 'abstract principles,' were unwilling to encounter the *anathema maranatha* of incensed theologians; and so the gardens were shut, and the people, for whose instruction they were formed, and who, at least, are made to pay for them, were sent about their

business, that is to say, to their garrets and their gin-shops.

Yet in early times the beadles were even more prosperous than at present. This easy-going, easy-tempered nineteenth century has deprived them of a great portion of their power. I was perusing one of their chronicles the other day, and after learning how George Thompson and Elspit Gray were fined four marks of penalty, and required to sit on the stool of repentance 'for drinking during Divine service,' and how George Gordon in Raynie was cited to appear for profaning the Sabbath 'by gathering grosers in time of sermon,' I came upon the following entry, which I took the liberty to extract :—

June 6, 1658.—*The said day Alexander Cairnie, in Tilliochie, was delaitit for brak of Sabbath in bearing ane sheep upon his back from the pasture to his ain house. The said Alexander compeirit and declairit that it was of necessity for saving of the beast's lyfe in tyme of storm. Was rebukit for the same, and admonished not to do the lyck.*

I could not well help adverting, on reading this passage, to an earlier decision, with which some of the members must have been familiar, but which does not appear to have been referred to in court :—

And he took him, and healed him, and let him go, and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?

So Alexander Cairnie, in Tilliochie, is 'rebukit for the same, and admonished not to do the lyck.'

In subsequent deliverances has the reverend court returned to the maxims of its Founder, or is there still a conflict of decision?

Into these high matters, however, 'secular' criticism does not care to intrude. But there is one side or aspect of the question with which it may venture to deal. Jean Paul says, in his eccentric way, that you cannot always be engaged in the commission of sin. 'Most sins are occasional sermons and occasional poems, and must frequently be set aside, from the third to the tenth commandment inclusive. Marriage, the Sabbath, a man's word, cannot be broken at any given hour. One cannot bear false witness against himself, any more than he can play nine pins, or fight a duel with himself. Many considerable sins can only be committed on Easter fair or New-year's day, or in the Palais Royal, or in the Vatican. Many royal, margravely, princely crimes are possible only once in a whole life—many never at all; for instance, the sin against the Holy Ghost.' But if the ascetic theory be adopted, you will be enabled to sin by the day, by the hour, by the minute. It is a sin to dance. It is a sin to walk in the fields on the Sabbath day. It is a sin to read Alfred Tennyson's poems, or Anthony Trollope's novels. 'For all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' Now such teaching is, to say the least of it, excessively and dangerously imprudent. It is a huge mistake to look at the dark side of human nature through a magnifying glass. Great theologians have held that the standard of conduct which the Apostles describe, those 'counsels of

perfection' on which they so earnestly dwell, are incapable of being reduced to practice in a sinful world and by imperfect creatures. But if you go farther than the apostles, if you enormously exaggerate the number of ways in which God's law may be broken, what is the result? The moral balance is upset. You obliterate the distinction between right and wrong. It is impossible for merely mortal men and women to observe the whole body of your ecclesiastical legislation, to keep within the desperately narrow path in which you require them to walk. What then? The men and women who have been brought up at your feet, who have been taught that looking at the flowers on the Sabbath day, or dancing, or theatre-going, are deadly transgressions, feel, when they do these things, that they have become sinners, and have rendered themselves obnoxious to the punishments inflicted on sinners. But they are men and women, and these things they cannot help doing, not innocently, like the rest of the world, but with a guilty blush on their cheeks. The next step is inevitable. They have crossed the boundary line,—once, twice, daily, hourly. They have danced: they have been at the theatre: they have read *Les Misérables*. Their pastor tells them that they are great offenders; that they have broken God's law; that they have incurred His righteous displeasure. They feel that this is true, but they have grown reckless,—repeated and continuous transgression has blunted the moral perceptions, and hardened the conscience. Even now they are sinners,—one sin more or less cannot turn the

balance. And if these slight pleasant delinquencies earn eternal damnation, as they have been taught to believe, what heavier penalty can attach to dishonest deailng, or an unchaste life? Such scholars are ripe for CRIME.

There are times—times when we are pained by the meanness and baseness of our contemporaries—when it is a relief to turn to the great masters of 'our English,' who fought as they wrote for the liberty which they loved,—to the noble English of Milton, to the scarcely less noble English of Macaulay. Among the men who have maintained inviolate their fidelity to principles, which, though borne down at times by senseless clamour, are 'yet strong with the strength, and immortal with the immortality of truth,' Lord Macaulay has a right to a not undistinguished niche. His constancy to the cause of religious freedom was the heroic element in a life that at some points was not that of a hero. There is a passage in an early speech, which he has not reprinted, but which I think almost more admirable than any other passage in his speeches. He had been charged, because he loved liberty, with supporting an infidel policy; this was his reply:—

'We hear it said that a policy which does not give a decided advantage to one sect over another, is an infidel policy. According to this authority, justice is infidelity—mercy is infidelity—and toleration is liberalism, and liberalism is only another name for infidelity. It is infidelity, it seems, to think worthily of God, and justly of His laws, and not to encircle with worldly

defences that religion of which the weapons are not carnal, and whose kingdom is not of this world. And it is infidelity to direct attacks rather against the evils of gross immorality than against altars which, though differing from ours in form, are not perhaps heaped with less acceptable incense, or kindled with less celestial fire. We must be content to bear this reproach, as it was borne by the great men of former days,—by Tillotson, Locke, and Sidney: and the only regret we ought to feel when we hear it, is, that men who profess, and perhaps sincerely feel a zeal for religion, should bring disgrace on those truths which are the last restraint on the powerful, and the last consolation of the unhappy.'

VIII.

THE BREED OF HEROES.

WE have had a long continuance of wet weather, and, in the absence of out-door employment, the hour in the cottage drawing-room before dinner has grown more popular than ever. And our readings have latterly lost a little of their desultoriness, and taken a more systematic shape. More than one cause has operated to produce the change.

Primo: The other day, after an eloquent speech from the Doctor against evil-doers and evil-doings, the Commodore struck in abruptly,—taking the bull by the horns as it were:—'You are always aggressive. You tell us what we ought not to do; I wonder if there be anything that we ought to do? Mere hostility is barren; negative teaching bears no fruit whatever; how can we fatten upon the empty husks of controversy? Show us the hero we are to imitate, if you please.'

Secundo: To which (the Doctor remaining silent) Horace, in his absolute way, replied:—'The breed of heroes is extinct.' Whereat we, remembering Indian mutinies, Scindian campaigns, Balaclava charges, sieges

of Lucknow, Lees, Longstreets, Stonewall Jacksons, and so forth, indignantly protested. Then followed sharp recrimination, and keen retort; and, finally, it was resolved that we should each select the hero or heroes in whom we believed, and that we should read together, during these rainy afternoons, whatever had been written about them, and of the heroic element which had manifested itself more or less visibly in their lives. It was curious to note the diversity of our choice. Painters, poets, admirals, generals, statesmen, merchants, mechanics, divines, were laid under contribution. Horace himself was forced to admit at last that (as he euphoniously put it) 'his definition was not exhaustive',—nay, even deigned to add, in his portrait of Cavour, a contribution to our historical portrait-gallery. I have extracted in the pages which follow, with, I hope, sufficient impartiality, the general conclusions to which our readings and discussions led us.

Letty, as is fit, leads the way with my Lord Dundee,—loving, as the better sort of women are apt to do, one who is not strictly a saint,—though I hear that they mean shortly to canonise him in the north.

MY LORD DUNDEE.

MANY portraits of John Graham of Claverhouse have been preserved, and no physiognomist can study these portraits—more especially the Leven portrait by Sir Peter—beautiful and scornful as Antinous—without suspecting that there was something greater in him than was manifested in his life. His life for the most part was uneventful; only at the close was he brought face to face with a great crisis. How did he bear himself in the day of trial? I think we have sufficient evidence to satisfy us that in circumstances of peculiar difficulty, he displayed surprising ability, sagacity, and aptitude for the conduct of great affairs.

His life, hitherto, had been tame. He had done the work assigned to him in a plain, sensible, matter-of-fact way, striving to do it thoroughly, and to make an end of it as quickly as possible. It never seems to have occurred to him that, in his dealings with the West Country Whigs, he was making for himself an evil name, that to future generations this military chief, executing without fear, or favour, or passion, the office committed to him by government, would be represented as a devil upon earth,—cruel, violent, rapacious, a lover of innocent blood. I do not think that he exceeded his commission, and the traditions of pitiless severity rest upon no historical basis.* We know, on the contrary

* I have expressed elsewhere my views upon what may be called, 'the Christian carrier episode,' in Claverhouse's career:

that, when in command at Dundee, his government was mild and beneficent. He abolished the punishment of

—'The apologists of Claverhouse have attempted to vindicate his character by asserting that the tradition is false. "Claverhouse," they say, "is not guilty, *because* he did not shoot John Brown." But suppose he *had* shot him, and with his own hand (as I incline to believe he did), would that admission close the controversy? Surely not. I am convinced that Claverhouse sincerely believed that the measures authorised by the government were necessary for the pacification of the country. The Covenanters, in his opinion, were bold and resolute fanatics, whose organisation was dangerous to the Commonwealth. If such were his opinion, would he have been justified in allowing any of their more prominent leaders to escape? On these men mercy was thrown away. If their perilous confederacy was to be repressed, it required to be done with a ruthless and unsparing hand. The government consequently had vested the power of life and death in their general; a system of martial law had been proclaimed in the disturbed districts; and if Claverhouse shot John Brown, he only exercised the authority which had been conferred upon him, and which was deemed essential to the security of the realm. John Brown may have been a Christian man, but at the same time he was a leader of the disaffected. If it was politic to inflict punishment in any case, he was clearly one of those who merited punishment. The policy of the government may have been cruel and foolish; but with its cruelty or folly we have as little concern as with the virtues of the sufferer, or the distress of his family. The rebel who disobeys the law, be it righteous or unrighteous, must not shrink from the consequences; and, if he dies, he dies because he has wilfully chosen to defy its penalties. A future age may pronounce him a martyr, and not a traitor; *that* is his reward, and with that he must learn to be content. "But Claverhouse shot him with his own hand." True; but he did so because his troopers, affected by the constant heroism of the victim, refused to become his executioners. Does not this circumstance absolutely absolve Claverhouse? Direct

death for petty thefts,—a wonderfully enlightened measure for the age, and one which could never have occurred to a man of the temperament ascribed by his defamers to Dundee. The truth is, that his character has been painted by the zealots whom he tried to crush; and pedlars and divines, the passion of the mob, and the animosity of the Church, have begotten between them a monstrous caricature. Even his domestic virtues—his temperance and his chastity—have been used to his disadvantage. One of his libellers complains that he was neither a debauchee nor a drunkard; his insatiate thirst for the blood of the saints leaving him no time to cultivate the milder vices.

He waited long; but his opportunity at last arrived. The Revolution of 1688 took place.

Loyalty with Dundee could hardly be called a passion. It was rather an ineradicable instinct which prevented

and dramatic impressions exercise a powerful influence over vulgar and inferior minds; and the affecting spectacle had unnerved his men. But Claverhouse, a soldier who belonged to a different order, could not permit his pity to subjugate his conviction of duty, or blind him, even momentarily, to the large national interests entrusted to his keeping. The crisis was sharp, and it claimed a sharp remedy. His men had refused to obey his orders—they were in virtual mutiny. It was imperative not only to vindicate the law, but to read them a lesson which should bring them back to their obedience. He himself became the executioner. He undertook the wretched and miserable duty. Its ugliness and its horror did not appal him. The office of the hangman is always a shameful office, and it asked perhaps an almost higher heroism, an even steadier effort of devotion, to inflict than to endure the blow.'

him from seeing for a moment that any road, other than that which lay by the throne, was open to him. 'It is not in the power of love or any other folly,' he had said long before, 'to alter my loyalty.' And when the hour of trial came, he never halted nor faltered. The King was the King—that was the end of the whole matter. He stayed with James to the last; and when in a stupid panic and bewilderment the Prince left his kingdom, Dundee immediately hurried down to Scotland, bearing with him the royal commission appointing him Commander-in-Chief of the royal forces in the North.

But he was not a blind nor ignorant partisan. Many letters, written by him when a fugitive in the Highlands, have been preserved. Macaulay has said that Claverhouse spelt like a washerwoman. But these letters alone would suffice to prove that, if he spelt like a washerwoman, he reasoned like a statesman; the fact which chiefly concerns us. The truth is, however, that he spelt neither better nor worse—rather better, perhaps, upon the whole—than the majority of his noble contemporaries; and his style is excellent,—terse, luminous, directly and admirably to the point. There is complete absence of violence or passion in his correspondence; he reasons quietly; he is politic, moderate, deliberative, at times sarcastic and even humorous. He never scolds as his biographer, Mr. Napier, scolds. 'Brand,' Mr. Napier observes in a characteristic passage, 'proved a scoundrel, and proceeded at once to the Prince of Orange, to whom he was introduced by another scoundrel, Gilbert Burnet.' Dundee does not

say that Burnet is a scoundrel,—simply and quietly, and with a pleasant air of contempt, he calls him 'Gibby.' 'Even Cassillis is gone astray, *misled by Gibby.*' Melfort had enclosed a letter, addressed by James to the Scottish bishops, most of whom, however, were prudently keeping out of sight. Dundee, in his reply, cannot resist the temptation to jest. 'The bishops?' he says, 'I know not what they are! They are now the Kirk *invisible*! I will be forced to open the letter, and send copies attested to them, and keep the original till I can find out our primate.' This composure, this superiority to impotent resentment, this capacity to jest,—at a time too when almost every Scottish nobleman had proved disloyal, and when, among Highland wastes, with almost superhuman industry, he was striving to raise an army for the King, and for the great enterprise which he meditated,—are very noticeable traits in the man.

There are other respects in which these letters are characteristic. Those who have hitherto regarded Claverhouse as the ignorant partisan or mere military chief, will be surprised to make acquaintance with a statesman holding large views and solid conceptions of public policy. The writer manifests, moreover, combined with the most perfect courtesy, a singular frankness of tone and independence of aim. There is a letter to Lord Strathnaver, who had advised him to renounce King James, and had offered his mediation with the government, which breathes the true spirit of chivalry. The peer had been entirely mistaken when he supposed

that the royal cause was desperate. On the contrary, the rebel government had not the shadow of stability. 'However,' continues the writer, 'I am no less obliged to your lordship, seeing that you made an offer of your assistance at a time when you thought I needed it.' His letters to Lord Murray—Athole's eldest son—are models of diplomatic address. He calmly enumerates all the personal inducements which were likely to influence a man like Murray—believed by Dundee to be false, but whom he desired, if possible, to secure—and then he proceeds in a candid statesmanlike tone to admit the justice of many of the popular complaints, and to show how the abuses which had irritated the nation might be most easily redressed. But the most remarkable letters are those addressed to Melfort, the evil genius of King James. Melfort was one of Dundee's old friends; and yet he had to tell him plainly that it was necessary for the King's interest that he should cease to hold any office about the King's person. He does this with perfect frankness, and yet in the way the least calculated to wound. A few extracts from these letters,—which are valuable, moreover, as showing how intimately Dundee, though in remote districts of the Highlands (he dates from Moy, in Lochaber, and Struan, in Athole), was acquainted with the dispositions of the Scottish nobility,—will bring us closer to the man than any description can do.

'I was not a little surprised to find by yours that my name has been made use of in carrying on designs against you. . . If I had any such design, I would

rather have trusted myself to the King, and written frankly to himself. I will assure you, all my endeavours to lay you aside, were only to yourself. I thought myself bound in duty to the King and friendship to you not to dissemble to you the circumstances you stand in with the generality of this country, and many in the neighbouring. Your merit and rising fortune has raised envy. Your favour with the King is cause enough with his enemies, and, I am feared, even with his ambitious friends; which I am sure can never be imagined to be one with me, for I can never have any pretensions in your way. Besides, you have contributed to all the considerable steps in my fortune. But I must tell you, besides these generals, there are many pretend to have received disobligations from you; and others, no doubt, with design on your employment; yet the most universal pretext is the great hand you had in carrying on matters of religion, as they say, to the ruin of king and country. I must tell you I heard a great resentment against you for advising the giving the Bulls for the bishops; and I am feared they themselves believe it. You know what the Church of England is in England: and both there and here they say generally that the King himself is not disposed to push matters of religion, or force people to do things they scrupled in conscience: but that you, to gain favour with those of that religion, had proved and prevailed with him, contrary to his inclination, to do what he did, which has given his enemies occasion to destroy him and the monarchy. This being, as I assure you it is

(however unjust), the general opinion of those nations, I thought in prudence for your own sake, as well as the King's, you would have thought it best to seem to be out of business for a time, that the King's business might go on smoother, and all pretext be taken away for rebellion; and this only in case the King find difficulty in his affairs; for I am obliged to tell you that, *if the people take umbrage as to their religion*, it will be, notwithstanding of all the foreign aid, a long war. . . . You desire I may tell you your faults. *I use to see none in my friends*, and, to tell you what others find, when I do not believe them, were to lose time. . . . It is the unjustest thing in the world, that not being popular must be an argument to be laid aside by the King. I do really think it were hard for the King to do it; but *glorious for you*—if once you be convinced that the necessity of the King's affairs requires it—to do it of yourself, and beg it of him.'

A few words, now, regarding the campaign on which he had embarked.

Dundee, at the outset, acted with great caution. He was content to clear the Highlands of the enemy. He did not care to risk a decisive battle; and his want of cavalry, and the predatory habits of the hillmen, made him slow to quit the natural fastnesses of the north. These are the reasons for delay which he assigns in his letters to the secretary. 'My Lord, I have given the King in general, account of things here; but to you I will be more particular. As to myself I have

sent you it at large. You may by it a little understand the state of the country. You will see that, when I had a seen advantage, I endeavoured to profit on it: but, on the other hand, shunned to hazard anything for fear of a ruffle; for the least of that would have discouraged all. I thought if I could gain time, and keep up a figure of a party, without loss, it was my best till we got assistance: which the enemy get from England every day. . . The only inconveniency of the delay is, that the honest suffer extremely in the Low Country in the time, and I dare not go down for want of horse—and, in part, for fear of plundering all, and so making enemies, having no pay.'

At last he was prepared. Amid these sterile and dismal defiles, as they were then deemed,—'an interminable chaos of mountain and of forest, and of the haunts of wild beasts,' in the language of one of his followers,—he had gathered an army. His standard-bearer has described, in lines which, in Mr. Napier's opinion, are not unworthy of the great poets of antiquity, the muster of the clans. Skye had sent forth its power. From her wild and wolfy forests all Badenoch had flocked to the fight. Isla and Iona's isles, Knapdale and Jura, Knoidart and Moidart, Rachlin and Rasay, Barra and Mull, with every neighbouring tribe, had rushed to arms. The dauntless Glengarry, the great Glencoe, the youthful Lord of the Isles, the Captain of Clanranald, Keppoch, 'flaming with gold,' the heroic and knightly Lochiel, Macleod of Rassa, 'from the crest of whose helm a brazen serpent hisses defiance,'

Stewarts, Grants, Frasers, Macleans, Macneils, had joined Dundee in Lochaber, when the royal standard was unfurled. They had cleared the hill-country, and now they were prepared to sweep the plain,—not, however, until Mackay, presuming on Dundee's forced inaction, had reached the gate of the Highlands.

That July morning must have repaid Dundee for many dull and stagnant years. Life, hitherto, had gone somewhat tamely with him : but to-day he has gathered the clans, and hangs like a hawk above the pass. The joy of the falcon, as its wings quiver in the sunlight, before it falls upon its prey, is, perhaps, comparable to the thrill which Dundee felt that summer morning, ere he hurled his claymores at Mackay. The fair kingdom of Scotland—lying, as it were, at his feet—was the immediate prize of victory ; how many kingdoms, thereafter, who can tell ?*

The Presbyterian general, with 5,000 men, horse and

* That Killiecrankie, had Dundee lived, would have made him master of all Scotland cannot be doubted. The day after the news of the battle had reached Edinburgh, Duke Hamilton wrote : 'We have got no notice of Dundee's motion since the action, and we fear all Perthshire and Angus will be in arms for him generally ; so what resolution the King takes should not be delayed, for *if he carries Stirling he has all Scotland.*' Sir John Dalrymple, the lord-advocate, writing on the previous day, calls the news 'sorry, sad, and surprising. I think the other side of Tay is lost, and Fife is in very ill tune. The Lord help us, and send you good news of your son.' And Sir William Lockhart, the solicitor-general, writes : 'All we can do is to entreat the King will send force with all expedition here ; *for we have nothing to hinder Dundee to overrun the whole country.*'

foot soldiers, passed unmolested through the pass of Killiecrankie on the morning of the 27th July, and took up a position on the north bank of the Garry. Dundee, whose head-quarters were at Blair-of-Athol, around which the clans were encamped, waited until Mackay had put the pass fairly between his army and the Low Country. Leaving a small force in the enemy's front to engage his attention, he crossed the Tilt with the remainder of his men above Blair, marched round the back of the Hill of Lude, and, cresting the heights of Renroy, descended on Mackay's right flank. This move not only obliged Mackay to change his front, but, in the event of the day going against him, left him in a position of imminent peril,—the steep banks of the flooded Garry lying directly in his rear. The hill-men, however, did not immediately attack,—Dundee holding them back 'until the sun had left the hill.' Then—himself in the van—he threw them upon the enemy's line. He had barely 2,000 men: but the impetuous charge of the Highlanders was irresistible. They had to advance across a level plain of some extent, and many fell in the advance: but Mackay's men, the moment the claymores were among them, wavered and gave way. Many fell on the field. Many were driven into the Garry. More than five hundred were captured and brought in prisoners next day by the Athole men, who had taken no part in the fight. The rout of the Presbyterian army was complete. It was, in fact, utterly annihilated,—only a few fugitive horsemen reaching the Low Country in safety.

There are one or two points in the conduct of this battle which deserve to be particularly noticed.

Dundee allowed Mackay to take his army through the pass, and then threw himself between the Presbyterian general and his line of retreat. He adopted this course to make defeat decisive. At the council-of-war held on the morning of the battle, it was suggested that Mackay should be attacked on his passage through the pass. But Dundee refused to adopt this suggestion. 'No,' he said, 'it is not enough to drive them back: they must be destroyed. Give us a decisive victory, and Scotland is ours in a week. Let Mackay and his troopers enter this *cul-de-sac*, and not a man of them escapes.' The move was at once daring and politic: and the issue of the day's fight fully vindicated the sagacious and far-seeing hardihood of Dundee.

It is noticeable, also, that thus early, Dundee had won the confidence of the clans. They had recognised at once the hand of a master. Nothing proves this more conclusively than the well-ascertained fact that the two armies faced each other in order of battle for more than three hours before the charge was made. It was difficult to restrain the hillmen at any time; and it must have been doubly difficult when they were being galled by the cannon which Mackay had brought with him. But the declining sun shone full in the faces of the clans; and Dundee resolutely declined battle until it had sunk behind the hills. The battle of Killiecrankie was fought in the summer twilight. These wild mountaineers, had they had their will, would have drawn

their claymores, whenever, emerging from the hazel woods of Lude, they caught sight of the foe; but their chief had said that it was needful to wait, and without a murmur they obeyed.

Daring and vigilant, cautious and far-seeing, prompt and resolute, Dundee undoubtedly possessed the qualities of a great commander. Throughout the whole of the campaign he appears to have committed only one blunder. But it was a fatal one. *He led his men at Killiecrankie.* Yet it was a calculated rashness. At the council-of-war, held on the morning of the battle, Lochiel had declared that he would quit the camp if the general put himself in the front. The life of Dundee was more valuable to the monarchy than even a victory at Killiecrankie. But Dundee had resisted. Would the clans trust him thereafter, if they saw him seeking safety in the rear? For the future he would be prudent; but—to win the confidence of his men—he must be permitted to give one harvest-day's work to the King his master. Lochiel yielded; and when the charge was made, Dundee was in the van.

'And if any of us shall fall upon this occasion,' he had said to his men before the battle, 'we shall have the honour of dying in our duty, and as becomes true men of valour and conscience.' He himself fell early, pierced in the right side by a musket-ball. But he lived to know that he had won a great victory. As he fell from his horse, one of his officers, a Johnstone, caught him in his arms. 'How goes the day?' asked the dying Viscount; and being answered, 'It goes well

for the King, but I am sorry for your lordship;' he replied, 'It the less matters for me, seeing that it goes well for my master.'

It is said that Dundee lived long enough to dictate a letter to the King: and the assertion is not unauthenticated. This is the letter which has been preserved:—

Lord Dundee's Letter to King James, after the Fight.

'SIR,—It has pleased God to give your forces a great victory over the rebels, in which three-fourths of them have fallen under the weight of our swords. I might say much of the action, if I had not the honour to command in it: but of 5,000, which was the best computation I could make of the rebels, it is certain that there cannot have escaped above 1,200 men. We have not lost full out 900. This absolute victory made us masters of the field and the enemy's baggage, which I gave to the soldiers, who, to do them all right, officers and common men, Highlands, Lowlands, and Irish, behaved themselves with equal gallantry to whatever I saw in the hottest battles fought abroad by disciplined armies; and this Mackay's old soldiers felt on this occasion. I cannot now, sir, be more particular; but take leave to assure your Majesty the kingdom is generally disposed for your service, and impatiently wait for your coming: and this success will bring in the rest of the nobility and gentry, having all their assurances for it, except the notorious rebels. Therefore, sir, for God's sake assist us, though it be with such another detachment of your Irish forces as you sent us before, especially of horse

and dragoons, and you will crown our beginnings with a complete success, and yourself with an entire possession of your ancient hereditary kingdom of Scotland. My wounds forbid me to enlarge to your Majesty at this time, though they tell me they are not mortal. However, sir, I beseech your Majesty to believe, whether I live or die, I am entirely yours,

'DUNDEE.'

Dr. Pitcairn wrote a classical epitaph on Claverhouse which Dryden translated, and which everybody knows; but terser and more telling was the exclamation of the old chief, who remembered the charge at Killiecrankie, at the indecisive fight of Sheriff-muir,—'Oh, for one hour of Dundee!'

Then Horace followed suit:—

CAMILLO BENSO DI CAVOUR.

MY hero (quoth Horace) is not an Antinous. A graphic pen has thus described him: — 'A squat, pot-bellied form; small stumpy legs; short, round arms, with the hands stuck constantly in the trousers pockets; a thick neck, in which you could see the veins swelling; scant, thin hair; a blurred, blotched face; and sharp grey eyes, covered by goggle spectacles.' You ask what I find heroic in this unheroic figure? It is perhaps enough to say that this man is Camillo Benso di Cavour, the most fertile and powerful brain that modern Europe has produced. That is, perhaps, enough: but as he has been dead beyond a year and a day, as his heroic qualities are gradually becoming more visible, and as we sadly lack men worthy of imitation (real men, not 'distinguished names' only), it may not be unprofitable to consider, at our leisure, of what stuff this latest 'hero' was compacted.

Cavour is, in the first place, one of our silent heroes, not much addicted to windy vehemence of any kind. There is a remarkable absence of clap-trap, alike in his speech—anxious, hesitating, inelegant, and intent only on saying the exact thing exactly—and in his conduct. He did his work, as he did his talk, quietly. He had a horror of charlatanism, meaning thereby the vulgar and noisy appeal to popular passion. Garibaldi's disposition is too pure and loftily unselfish

to expose him to the imputation; else his appearance at the Naples opera in a red shirt (because he was too poor, though he had the national treasury at hand, to purchase decent garments) might be called a piece of charlatanism. Cavour could not have done this; he would have felt that the conqueror of a country might not unpardonably help himself to a new coat. His temperament, in like manner, indisposed him to violence —when violence was not indispensable. He would not break with his bitterest foe, if he could avoid it. When the Vatican, for instance, vetoed the bishops nominated at Turin, the Minister did not retaliate in a direct or angry way. He merely ceased to nominate any candidates at all: a policy which quickly reduced the number of bishops, without inflicting, as it appeared, any loss on the community. The policy of contemptuous acquiescence was maintained by Cavour on many occasions with complete success.

And Cavour was a moderate, as well as an undemonstrative man; moderate in feeling, and moderate in design. He was no fanatic. He loved the golden mean—*auream mediocritatem.* He was never the slave of impulse; never allowed himself to be influenced by resentment, remorse, or visionary enthusiam. It is said that he was an ardent whist-player, and on one occasion lost a larger sum than he could well afford. Many men would have played on more recklessly; many men would have thrown away the cards in disgust; but Cavour, for the future, merely reduced his stakes. The smile of the Court could not make him an apologist of

tyranny; when its ban was on him he did not ally himself with the republicans. He was, in one sense, an intensely practical man. Pure logic was a science which he did not comprehend, and for which he had no aptitude. 'He did what he could.' That was his motto. Yet Cavour, though he did not love speculative truisms, was not insensible to the higher and more spiritual motives by which nations are governed. His entire career for many years was an appeal to these intangible influences. 'We have lost,' he is reported to have said after Novara, 'thousands of brave soldiers; we have wasted many millions; we have had disastrous campaigns; and from all this we have only reaped one thing; we have got the Italian tricolour as our standard, instead of the flag of Savoy. Well, in my opinion, we have not paid too dear a price.' The man who in those dark days could hold that Novara was not a barren defeat, recognised very clearly the power of national sentiment, of aspirations for unity and freedom, as opposed to more material agencies. His financial operations were not directly paying speculations; but they did what they were intended to do. They made Sardinia the model Italian State. A similar feeling induced him to embark in the Crimean campaign. He probably did not care a straw which power held Sebastopol; but he was persuaded that a few drops of Italian blood shed on an eastern battle-field would do much for Italy. When the nations of Europe beheld an Italian army in the field, they would begin to comprehend that there was an Italian nation behind, and that the nation could

produce live soldiers as well as old pictures and ballet-dancers. Mrs. Browning has summed up in a powerful couplet, the impression produced on the mind by Cavour's policy during the uneventful years that followed Novara:—

> He held up his Piedmont ten years,
> Till she suddenly smiled, and was—Italy.

The Minister who could work on in this indirect way for so long, and who could enlist such apparently hostile elements to aid his design—waiting in patience 'for the atoning hour to come'—must have possessed a very powerful imagination, or been possessed by an absorbing passion. Cavour's passion was the Italian Kingdom. In his boyish dreams he already saw himself the Minister of a united Italy, and the dream of his youth became the devouring excitement of his life. A holy ambition burned beneath that politic subtlety. It is impossible to arrive at a just estimate of his character, unless we keep this constantly in mind. Cavour was the embodiment of an *idea*. The idea was that to which Dante long before had given an imaginative personality. The ravenous she-wolf was to prey upon Italy, 'until the greyhound come to drive her to her doom.'

> He shall not feed on lands and pelf,
> But wisdom, love, and righteousness.
> From Feltro unto Feltro he shall rule,
> And raise our humbled Italy,
> For which the maid Camilla bled
> With Nisus, Turnus, and Euryalus.

Thus Cavour's is a somewhat impersonal character. It

wants the picturesque lights and shades of passion which we find in other men. He was no partisan. He was not interested in party conflicts or party triumphs. He used a party as long as he found that it was useful to him; whenever it came in his way, whenever it ceased to aid the cause for which he laboured, he threw it away, as he threw away an old glove. He had few intimate associates. He was friendly, sociable, ready to converse; but none ever penetrated into the deeps of his heart. His heart was occupied with a single passion; and there was no place left in it for love or friendship. He did not marry; he rather liked to flirt with women in a light incidental way; but he was never vehemently attached. Nor was he 'a good hater.' It is said that after Novara, the youthful Victor Emanuel drew his sword, and shaking it towards the Austrian camp, said with a fierce oath, 'L'Italia sarà!' It may be doubted whether the large and placid intelligence of Cavour could appreciate this burning resentment. Austria was in his way, and Austria required to be removed; but he did not feel that vehement personal antipathy which animated the King. He has been called unscrupulous, and in one sense he was unscrupulous. He had not only a serene contempt for the verdict which the precisian might pronounce on the machinery which he employed, but I suspect, that in his eyes the end entirely sanctified the means. Universal suffrage was a mockery and a snare; but as the Tuscans were determined to elect Victor Emanuel, universal suffrage might be properly resorted

to. 'Oh! you know,' he said, with his quiet laugh, 'it 's a capital invention.' There was not a drop of bitterness in his nature, and yet he did cruel things, which politicians more cruel by nature would have shrunk from. Men and women were the pieces upon his chess-board, and he offered them up without remorse. Thus he sacrificed the Princess Clothilde—a young and innocent girl. Not that he desired or intended to hurt her, but the cause of Italian freedom claimed a costly victim, and he laid her without scruple upon its altar. But if he sacrificed others, he did not spare himself. Whenever he found that his presence obstructed the good cause, he voluntarily withdrew. He was utterly unselfish. Italy was to be delivered. He knew that he was the appointed deliverer; but he was quite willing that others should undertake the work, if they could do it better. He was not exactly an unbeliever; but he did not concern himself much about the affairs of the next world. He had enough to do in the present; the future must take care of itself. 'I have got my Italy to deliver in the meantime; that is a specific piece of work which I have been appointed to conduct; and finish it I must before I die. Let me perish, if Italy be free.' In this sacrificial spirit he worked on to the end. 'Save your souls; each man his own dirty soul for himself,' is, according to a modern moralist, the instinct of modern Christendom. Cavour's instinct was different. 'Let us say a prayer for your soul, my son,' the priest who attended him in his last moments is reported to have said. 'Yes, father,' was the reply; 'but let us pray, too, for Italy.'

To Cavour's character, in one respect, complete justice has not yet been done. Though eminently and decisively firm, he was never obstinate. His vision was wonderfully steady and clear. He saw his game from the beginning. He had *rehearsed* his career, and its incidents bear the marks of elaborate preparation. Such a man was necessarily indifferent to public opinion. He could not alter the argument of his discourse to satisfy the mob. Thus he was often temporarily unpopular. But though no amount of unpopularity could divert him from the course which he had chalked out (if that course, and that course alone, could ensure the final success of his design), yet he was always ready to yield, when he saw that 'the inexorable logic of facts' was against him. He could brave the mob; but facts were 'chiels that wud na ding,' and he never tried to resist them. But he had not only wonderful tact,—the instinct which enabled him to separate transient manifestations of public feeling from those authoritative 'facts' which could only be disregarded on pain of defeat: he had likewise the faculty which enabled him with rapidity and boldness to alter his design, and adapt it to the circumstances of the hour. This is, perhaps, the supreme test of a statesman's capacity. To plan in the study is one thing; to make the plan work in the actual world is a harder task, and requires a vigorous and masculine, yet pliant genius. The formation of a Northern Italian kingdom was, in Cavour's view (who agreed with Victor Amadeus that Italy, like an artichoke, had to be eaten leaf by leaf), the first step

towards national unity. When that step was taken, he desired to pause. He wished to organise and consolidate the new monarchy. But Garibaldi's invasion of Naples precipitated the *dénoûment*—prematurely, as Cavour thought at the time; prematurely, as the events that are still occurring seem to prove. The Minister's policy at this difficult crisis was eminently happy. He could neither assist nor resist Garibaldi. The one course would have been as perilous as the other. But, in a masterly way, he did—nothing. He lay on his oars and waited. Garibaldi entered Naples, and proclaimed Victor Emanuel. The Dictator was intoxicated, as he might well be, with his triumph. He was for the moment the foremost man in Italy. Cavour's subtle and politic mind viewed this position of affairs with keen anxiety. Garibaldi was the last man to whom the Italian cause could be safely confided. The rashness and the arrogance of his councils (if not restrained) would destroy that hard-won freedom. The moment, consequently, had arrived, when it was indispensable that Sardinia should recover the leadership which had been temporarily delegated to a daring trooper. The Sardinian army entered the Papal States, and overran Central Italy. The Sardinian monarch, flushed with victory, advanced at last on equal terms to meet the guerilla captain, who came to the interview with a kingdom in his hand—a royal gift. It is difficult to overrate the sagacity of the policy which dictated this move; or the rare celerity, boldness, and vigour with which it was executed. The more the circumstances

are examined, the more clearly will it appear that thus only could the perilous victories of Garibaldi have been made permanently available to the Italian cause.

This is my hero. Not, by any means, a blameless life; on the contrary, in many ways, most blameworthy. Still, the man knew his own mind, and did it. There was, it may be, blood on his hand and guilt on his conscience ere he died. But we are all sinners: there is not one man who doeth good; no, not one; yet Sir Thomas Browne is assured that '*they* may sit in the orchestra and noblest seats of heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanly contended for glory.' I do not know that Camillo Benso di Cavour occupies a seat in the orchestra; but he has already earned his recompense, for the tears of a free people have fallen upon his tomb.

The Doctor in turn was called upon; but ere he had time to open, the Commodore interposed: 'The Doctor wrote this years ago,' he said, unfolding a manuscript which he had with him. 'Charles Napier was his hero then—I fancy he still is. He has always been mine. With the permission of the author, and of this company, I will read you what he wrote when Sir William's heroic portrait of his brother was fresh in his mind's eye. 'Tis a book should be sold for half-a-crown, and put into every school-boy's hand.'

CHARLES JAMES NAPIER.

HAS Charles James Napier been justly estimated, righteously dealt by? I think not. An authentic hero has been among us, and passed away from our service scantily rewarded. The ermine of a peer, the baton of a marshal, would have poorly expressed the gratitude we owe him. He spent himself for us, and we made him in return a G.C.B. Only now does England begin to feel that she has misunderstood and mistaken one of her greatest and most strikingly original sons.

Not even *the* Duke was greater,—though the contrast between the two veterans was striking. It may be expressed by the contrast between the Roman and Tuscan cathedrals. The dome of Buonarotti is a consummate architectural marvel; but we miss, in its complete and perfect finish, the picturesque peculiarities, the striking eccentricities of its rival.

A change has taken place: but even yet there is a pettiness in our treatment of this great man. The public and its critics dwell upon the second-rate features of his character; on the doubtful incidents of his career. We are willing to admit that this may be partly attributed to the bellicose spirit in which his biography has been written. The dust of the dead has been disturbed. The ashes of long-forgotten animosities have been raked up. Of Sir William Napier's conduct there can be but one opinion. The hearty abuse which Sir Charles when

aggrieved dashed against his opponents, may be pardoned, and, as we believe, justifiably republished as a part of the *res gestae*. But Sir William's fierce and malignant commentary cannot be read without pain, and we confess that our enjoyment of the narrative of the Scindian campaign was entirely destroyed by the bitter attack on Sir James Outram.

Otherwise the work has been well done. Sir William leaves his brother to tell his own story, and has therein shown commendable sense and discrimination. For Sir Charles's literary capacity was indeed most remarkable. Whatever he wrote, he wrote well. And the style of his writing is symptomatic of the style of his mind—strong, practical, terse, logical, with a dash of the finer sense we call 'genius.' 'Genius,' indeed, attached to everything that he did; we see it in his letters, journals, despatches; we see it in his conduct of war and government. In his literary work it is chiefly noticeable from the strong vertical light it casts on the page, and which makes the men and women he describes stand out with wonderful vividness. Sir Charles, as a writer, is, moreover, exceedingly dramatic: his descriptions of character commonly terminating in dialogue,—the trick of men too hasty to analyse. And though on the whole clear and lucid, rather than eloquent, he says grand things at times. 'I think,' he exclaims, mournfully, 'my life will last until unable to walk without treading on the tombstone of some one dear to me.' In the Straits of Messina—'Passed through the Straits of Messina, with the phantom-looking head of Etna loom-

ing in the clouds, and the plain of Maida on the left—the glory of brave men perishing with their bodies; the eternal mountain bidding time defiance!' On the anniversary of his father's death—'This day my father died, in 1804, at Clifton. How small others appear when I think of him! He cared little for those things which ordinary men seek so eagerly; he was too great, too majestic for small command; but what signifies all this? Death!'

I wish to gather together and condense into a compact picture—sketched, as far as may be, in his own terse and nervous lines—those features of Sir Charles Napier's mind which I deem most characteristic of the man. The capacity of the consummate captain demands indeed a passing tribute; but I am more desirous to dwell upon the qualities of moral and intellectual life which were common to the soldier and the civilian. A more curious and interesting 'subject' has rarely been submitted to the critic's knife.

And in viewing the moral side of his character, the first thing that strikes us is the state of antagonism in which he contrived to spend his life. Sir William's theory appears to be, that there is a general conspiracy of the infatuated human family against the Napiers, which that talented house is bound to resist to the death. 'The barbarous nurse,' to whose cruelty he ascribes his brother's stunted growth, appears as the first agent in a diabolical plot which pursued Sir Charles step by step through life, and which, being promoted by the British Government and the East India Company, was finally,

though only partially, successful. Another explanation may be, perhaps with better reason, adopted. Napier was not indeed a vain man. He always formed a modest estimate of what he achieved. He excused himself, apologised to the Duke, for winning the battle of Meeanee. But at the same time he had the most perfect confidence in his own powers. 'A general officer,' he said characteristically, 'should have no councillors but his pillow and his courage.' And he was, moreover, inexorably honest. His rigorous logic permitted no compromises. He could not tolerate the decent hypocrisies in which our society habitually takes shelter. Pressing straight on to the mark of his high calling, can we wonder that he should have come in contact with the men who, either from wilfulness or incompetence, were doing all they could to prevent him from reaching it? Such a man was constitutionally ill fitted for the red tape and nepotism of England. He could not endure patronage: he could not brook, could with difficulty obey, the orders of an incompetent leader. By nature he was intended for chief command. Yet he had a fine eye for great men: Napoleon, Moore, Wellington, Ellenborough, he at once cordially recognised: nay, he made at times the most conscientious efforts to adapt himself to those mediocre generals and governors under whom he acted, and of whose policy he approved. When, with this iron and incorruptible truthfulness were united nerves of womanly delicacy and sensibility—almost *too* sensitive, acute, and tensely strung—it need occasion no surprise that his resent-

ments should have been fierce and frequent. The ardent, anxious, conscience-lighted, inexorably honest man rubbed ruthlessly against artifices, prejudices, the slaves of habit and red tape generally; and, as could not but be, the sensitive nerves were jarred, and the rude, eloquent tongue spoke bitterly.

Napier's stubborn truthfulness never deserted him. To his mother he was a most tender and devoted son; but his logic was quite as rigorous to her as to any one. The thing was true, and neither fear nor affection could make it otherwise. And to him there was greater necessity to speak the truth out than to most men: he could not smile at a prejudice, and put it by lightly, or quietly crush it beneath his heel,—as some men, perhaps the strongest, have been able to do; it stung him at once into angry words, and trenchant argument. 'The doctrine of despising I hold very cheap; meet every man with his own weapons, is my creed, and failing is your own fault: but fail I will not, without a blow!'

As I have said, I see no good reason why these impetuous judgments should not be recorded in print. Why not? They are needful to enable us to understand one of our great men; as such they have become a portion of the public property. If the judgments were rash, hasty, hot, impetuous, we know what the man was, and they will not hurt now. We do not think any the worse of those he scorned and hated: we say only that they came in contact with this man, and that the two could not agree. He has gone his way; let those that remain go theirs, and do their work well and

honestly as he did. We read Napier's attack on Outram, and say, It is well; we read how Outram puts himself under Havelock, and, sabre in hand, rides at the column head into battle; and we say again, It is well. Both men are very noble at heart: that they come into collision, and that bitter reproaches are spoken by the one and proudly resented by the other, is grievous, lamentable if you will, but inevitable as fate. Still they are great men both,—none the less because the antagonism is so vital.

The partisan cannot rise to this view of the question; and ignoble motives have been freely attributed to either in respect of the Scindian quarrel. Napier was avaricious; Outram, jealous. Both charges are false. Napier by nature was perfectly unselfish. He would never accept a farthing from his mother,—'give it to the other boys,' he said. He renounced pecuniary reward whenever he felt that it was not his due. 'Must work for my pay; better live honest than die a rogue!' Avarice, indeed, was altogether repugnant to his theory of a career. For *work* was what he craved for; and the less cumbered he was the better could he do his work. Afterwards, when he had a family, it of course became his duty to provide for its members. He went to India late in life, being prepared 'to risk all for my girls;' and parsimony in such a cause becomes *parsimonia*, the *magnum vectigal* of the ardent Roman. 'My victories,' he writes, in his journal, 'will enable me to provide for my family and my relations, and to give something to John Kennedy's children!'—the children

of his oldest comrade—'but I have no faith in riches.' When told that he had fought the desperate battle of Meeanee with the view of obtaining prize-money, his calm reply was unanswerable:—'I would hardly have risked such a deed and my own eternal salvation for a few pounds of gold, and that even by no means sure of being got—on the contrary, all but impossible.' The truth is, that the position was regarded by the two men from repugnant and vitally opposed points of view. Outram, with his political traditions, considered the war the deliberate violation of a solemn treaty which had been entered into with the great and independent princes of the Indus. Napier, on the other hand, determined the question as a soldier and a philanthropist might be expected to do. The Indus formed a noble north-west frontier for our Indian empire, and the Scindians were ground down by the cruel tyranny of the Ameers. What better mission for a great captain than to lead his army into their provinces, release one of the fairest portions of the earth from foul misgovernment, and rescue the peaceful population of the great river from the domination of a worthless family of robbers? That he persuaded himself he was in the right, I have no doubt; though it cannot be denied, I think, that he somewhat too eagerly took advantage of a crisis, which his own policy had largely promoted, or at least in some measure accelerated. With these antagonistic views, how was it possible that the two men should agree?

Besides this unflinching honesty, Napier's moral cha-

racter was remarkable for tenderness, geniality, and endurance.

His intense tenderness to his mother is very touching. Love for her amounted to idolatry. Not very demonstrative, it was yet rooted in the inmost deeps of his being. 'It is not my way,' he writes to her, 'to talk over these things often, but I don't forget them, and like to dwell upon them with gratitude.' Throughout her life, however far sundered they might be, they continued closely knit together: after her death they were not divided. In the heart of the Scindian desert, when the perilous march on Emaun Ghur had been accomplished, he writes in his journal:—'I dreamed last night of my mother: her beauteous face smiled upon me. Am I going to meet her very soon? Well, we shall all meet again: unless this hideous work of war sends me to hell—which is not improbable.' Strange words of a strange tenderness! Nor is it confined to his mother; when any one suffers whom he loves he manifests acute distress. On the death of his wife, Elizabeth, he gives vent to his feelings in a prayer which, for dreary and hopeless pain, is one of the most sorrowful ever spoken. 'Oh God! merciful, inscrutable Being, give me power to bear this thy behest! Hitherto I had life and light, but now all is as a dream, and I am in darkness—the darkness of death, the loneliness of the desert! Oh God! defend me, for the spirit of evil has struck a terrible blow. I too can die, but thus my own deed may give the dreadful spirit power over me, and I may, in my haste to join my adored Elizabeth, divide

myself for ever from her! My head, my head seems to burst. Oh mercy! mercy! for this seems past endurance!' He is bound up in his brothers; he never forgets his old nurse, Susan Frost; no good-luck befalls him but he wishes 'Kennedy' were present to share it: with the people whom he is sent to govern or subdue—be they Chartist, or Scindian, or Cephalonian—he at once comes into warm and hearty contact. Even for the gipsies and Bohemians of society he shows good-humoured charity, if not sympathy. 'The people are very much to my liking, but the greatest liars in the world.'

When a young man he was every hour of the day fiercely in love, and his frank descriptions of the successive competitors for his susceptible heart are very graphic and amusing. Mrs. Barwell, Miss Trowbridge, Miss Home, Miss Robb, and pretty widows unnumbered, pass rapidly across the stage. 'Between Mrs. Barwell and Miss Trowbridge, who is a surprising mixture of beauty, goodnature, and fun, the devil himself is not more flaming than myself; I go about all fire! . . . . Nothing more about expeditions, and I am again in love with a Miss Home: a dear little Scotch thing, with a beautiful face and beautiful figure, a beautiful dancer, and beautiful genius. My heart is a cinder, and as heat is said to cure heat, I stand by the fire all day to draw out my flame. . . . Well, Miss Robb is middle-sized: her features are without a fault, and she has an ocean of countenance: in fine, no defect can be discovered in her person, and her mind is equally admirable.

. . . There is a pretty widow, niece to the paymaster, come among the 50th. She is only twenty-two. Now, never to marry any but a widow has been a vow of mine; and here is one to my hand! She is a pretty thing as a man could wish to see, and a widow I am bent on.' Till the day of his death he remained a constant admirer of the fair sex. 'I speak of men only,' he says in one of his later letters; 'women of all countries are good; or if bad, are such pleasant fellows that it don't signify on which side of the ledger their account stands.'

Another mode, and perhaps the most strikingly characteristic, in which this tenderness of disposition showed itself, was in the profound affection he felt for the animals around him—his horses, dogs, cows, camels. He possessed that capacity for recognising a human character in the lower animals which is often a distinguishing mark of creative genius. Sometimes this sympathy went even further, and disturbed and saddened him when any work of destruction, though of dead walls merely, was being carried out. 'Everybody was delighted to see Emaun Ghur blown up; to me it was pain. I was cast down, thinking of all the labour and pleasure constructing it had given.' Only a man of the vivid sensibilities of genius could have penned that sentence before the hostile stronghold whose destruction signalled his triumph. The barbarian feels no pain in destroying; to the mind of genius every manifestation of man's life and intelligence is infinitely precious.

The frequent allusions to his dumb friends that occur

in his journal are charming. He describes a horse with the relish that Landseer paints one. 'Hotspur is about Model's size, but more of an Arabian than a racer, with a beautiful curved neck, and fiery as the devil, yet without vice. Cà Ira was to him as the great devil is to a little one; he was so large and powerful that when angry he was tremendous, and would and could easily have broken his own neck and mine. This little devil is like a feather to me after the great one, and is as much under my thumb as a Mameluke's horse; I hate a vicious horse, but delight in a fiery one, and have named this one Hotspur; it suits his temper. . . . Poor Blanco thinks a bivouac the worst amusement in the world, as he gets nothing but heath and hard riding. Poor fellow! I kiss and coax him, but it don't make up for no oats. He is the most delightful animal that ever was, but thinks being admired by the Lisbon ladies with a full stomach better than my affection with heath.'

Till their death he retains for his horses the most affectionate solicitude. He cannot bear to be parted from them, and would no more think of killing one because it had grown old and infirm, than he would think of killing his grandmother for a similar reason. 'Molly' (his little school Arabian) 'cannot move; she must be left sick. Now, I do not like leaving the little thing behind, nor yet risking her on a voyage, but a horse I must have. So she follows me, and the chance of her being hurt worries me. . . . Anything is better than cutting Blanco's throat after sixteen years' comradeship.

I may go to perdition, but not for Blanco, *anyways*. My poor good old beast!' Molly was sent home to the paternal fields at Castleton, where, with two others, she attained a patriarchal age; but the beloved Blanco died suddenly on board ship in the Bay of Biscay. 'Mr. Ore constantly fed him with biscuit, but the long voyage killed him! How I did love him! Well, I and all I love must go the same way. Mr. Ore grew so fond of Blanco that he wanted to say prayers for him, to the great horror of the ship captain; yet I am sure that he has a soul as good as most captains of merchant ships. Noble, excellent animal! You were good and brave, and faithful as ever charger was.'

When he went to the East, he made friends with his camels, and quickly insinuated himself into their good graces, and kindly, clumsy ways. There is no better account than he has given us of 'those dear, solemn camels, with their noses high up in the air, looking so philosophical, and dragging nine-pounders tied to their tails as if they were feathers.' 'I was struck,' he says, 'by one peculiarity, which makes me hope that the camel does not suffer from the horrid treatment inflicted so much as a horse or mule. When struck with a heavy cutting whip by the most rigorous and merciless arm, he never flinches nor springs, but keeps his solemn, majestic walk, with his nose in the air, as if not touched; if he is drawing, you perceive a sudden increase of energy, but no sudden pull, no indication of pain: nor does he groan. Poor patient brutes! I pity them much, and hope to save them and ourselves from the

cursed fools who overloaded them. In the desert the camel has no rival; his great splay feet never sink into the sand; the heat never worries him; he defies thirst beyond all other beasts, and eats all that is to be had; nor does he require a great deal. All he asks is not to be overloaded; and nature has pointed this out so clearly to him and us, that the beast, who shows no sign of pain or complaint when whipped, makes piteous moanings and growlings when too much is being put upon him: they are his remonstrances, which the two-legged beasts will not listen to, and the poor camels are killed by brutes.'

This wide and active sympathy is closely allied with the next characteristic I note,—his geniality or humour. The greatest humorists, as Mr. Thackeray has said in writing and proved in practice, are often the most tender-hearted men; and it may be further noted that few very great men—men of the highest calibre in any department—have been entirely destitute of humour. For real humour infers power, grasp, comprehensiveness, and distance of vision. A truly great mind can play with the facts which crush and oppress a mediocre intellect. Sir Charles's humour was peculiar to himself, though it often reminds the reader of Rabelais. It was sagacious in its riot; instinct with strong common sense, even when most unbridled. If wounded, his spleen discharged itself in a jest; hurt or annoyed, the spirit of mockery became uproarious. And it was quite spontaneous: there was no desire or effort to be witty. 'Nonsense will come, and devil take me if I can stop,

for the life of me. . . . What a great relief nonsense is to a man who has been working hard; I have a *quantum* in me beyond the ordinary run of men; and if it had no vent, my death would ensue from undelivered jokes. I am delighted to hear that you are so well, dearest mother, and that you bore the comet like an angel; by the way, no doubt exists in my mind that comets are the souls of good post-horses, who still ply their trade, carrying angels charged with despatches.' It was chiefly noticeable in his writing, but it sometimes helped him in action; for in life humour is one of the most potent auxiliaries a wise man can enlist. Some of the humorous scenes are admirable. 'A deputation,' he writes, 'of these Banians tried to turn me to account. They claimed from me a debt of God knows how many rupees, due by the Ameers. "Your claim," said I, "was no doubt just on the Ameers; but I never heard of people fighting to pay other men's debts, and cannot possibly set such an example." "But then we shall starve and die." "Just what is wanted, for I am making a beautiful burying-ground, and you shall be buried there gratis. Set your hearts at rest." This joke settled the business. The whole treasury would not cover such debts.' This account of the Cephalonian bishop is a rich specimen of the Rabelaisian vein: 'Meanwhile, to bless us, we have got a bishop appointed, an excellent pious man, who formerly lived by sheep-stealing, which he now calls his pastoral life. My bishop's depth of learning and length of beard are both admirable: he piques himself on a thorough knowledge

of the canon law of Justinian, which chiefly rules the Greek Church; and he assured me the said Justinian wrote the *Code Napoleon* out of friendship for Buonaparte, as they had been at the school of Brienne together. Disputing this fact, I asserted that Justinian was king of England in the reign of Solomon, and that an ancestor of mine had been sent to Jerusalem to teach logarithms to the architect who built the Temple. This greatly disturbed my bishop's theory as to Brienne; but he is comforted by Adam's giving him about twice my pay, an extravagance not to be accounted for.'

Again: his power to *endure* was wonderful. We should not, at first sight, have supposed that a man so constitutionally impatient would have possessed in any striking degree this passive virtue. But when left to himself, the little man could bear almost any torture; though intrusive sympathy worried and irritated him. 'Do not write any more on the subject,' he begs, alluding to his friend Cameron's early death: '*pity is hateful.*' The description which he gives of his own *physique* is, I believe, tolerably characteristic. 'I am so thin, so sharp, so Jewish, so rascally, so knavish a looking son of a gun, that mayhap nature never turned such an one before out of her lathe.' But the spirit which animated this shabby frame was invincible. Death often mastered the outworks, but could not storm the citadel. He had work to do, and do it he must before he died. The pestilence of 1832 marked him out, but he ultimately triumphed over its most malignant type. 'Too hard worked,' he writes after Meeanee, 'my

body wastes away; however, duty must be done, and self put aside. Meanwhile, the heat is fearful: I am sixty, and the heat tells heavily on me; but all is fate.' Still he would not give in; he continued to elaborate a magnificent strategic combination 'under a heat which mortal cannot face;' at the moment when the guns from the desert announced its successful completion, he was tumbled over by apoplexy. Several days before, feeling himself staggering, he had sent his whole scheme of war to his subordinate at Hyderabad, with peremptory injunctions to carry it out should he die before it was executed; so had he died, death would not have defeated him. But he did not die: he was bled in time, and recovered; and three days after the attack, we find him dictating an elaborate State Paper to the Government. A most indomitable man!

Constant work, indeed, of some kind—'action, action, action'—was his natural element. Without it he pined and languished, lost his spirits and health. But work, especially dangerous work, made him a new man, animated him with fresh life. To no human being did the old adage, *Laborare est orare*, ever come more true. He regained composure and serenity in labour; labour discharged his religious doubts, his speculative difficulties, his moral perplexities, and left him free, hopeful, and happy. 'The most troublesome of all troubles to me is having nothing to do,—a too easy chair is the rack for me. I was born on the bank of the Thames, and partake of the quality of the water—never good until fermented and stirred up; then,

when all other water becomes bad, it freshens from contrariness.' Before dangerous work especially he grew bright and buoyant. His spirit bounded lion-like to meet the crisis. Almost the only occasion when he confesses in his journal that he has been supremely happy is in the short record entered on the day previous to the battle of Meeanee,—the day before he desperately hurled his handful against forty thousand armed men, the pick of the warlike chivalry of Beloochistan. 'My troops are in high spirits: so am I.'

Laborare est orare,—that was the fundamental article of his creed. He was looked upon with suspicion by the religious world: for he felt (as most truly devout men have felt) that the relations between man and his Maker are too intimate and personal to admit of the interposition of any meddling priest. Whether he accepted any strictly dogmatic religious scheme may be doubted. No such true life, indeed, could work itself out, without unconsciously, at least, assimilating much of the Highest Wisdom. And the things that he says on this and kindred subjects are many of them profound and memorable. 'Our own folly is the cause of our misery, and we should bear the results of folly patiently, *looking forward, not back*.' 'What will the coming year produce? Fate settles these matters luckily, for if God left them to us, what wild work we should make!' 'Yet my wish is not to be made hay of yet; no time suits one to die.' 'I cannot believe,' he writes, when demanding chaplains for his force, 'that such a government will allow Mammon to cross the path of our

Saviour, to stand between the soldier and his God, and let his drooping mind thirst in vain for the support which his Church ought to afford!' In days like these, when an arbitrary separation between the secular and religious life is attempted to be set up, the example of a man whose iron rule of right was not laid by for Sunday or holiday use, but beat with every beat of his heart, is not without a substantial value.

The sentiments which he entertained as to the relations subsisting between man and the invisible world —so far as I can gather from this book — chiefly related to two subjects. In the first place, the world itself presented him with the spectacle of an intelligent will working under an iron fate. 'I also am anxious about my brothers, but it is not an anxiety that gives me uneasiness; it only makes me anxious for news; predestinarianism is too strong in me to allow of my suffering from these things; it is only what can be altered by ourselves that agitates me.' 'Age, like a river, goes down, down, and there is no up. Fate! Fate! Let me go to work.' There is in his mind this constant apprehension of an Avenger, against whom we contend in vain, but whom, nevertheless, it is our duty to disregard while we do our work honestly and heartily. 'Stoicism is only good when we cannot help ourselves. Epictetus would have been more to my taste if he had broken his master's skull instead of patiently letting his own be broke.' The other subject which most affected his mind was *death*. The Beyond perplexed him with its still mystery. 'My friend Stewart is dead: *I wonder*

how he likes it.' 'Heigho! this is a weary world, and I will go to sleep, which is like death. Yet we love sleep, and fear death! Strange! *if* they be alike, death must be, indeed, a blessing.' The idea had evidently obtained an engrossing authority over his mind; yet he at no time quailed before it, but met it as he met all other accidents of this mortal state, calmly, and with the resolve of brave men who may be awe-stricken, but not fear-stricken.

Lastly, let it be noted that whatever he did, down to the minutest detail, he did with his whole heart. 'So far from thinking with you that my reforming efforts are useless, I hold them to be of consequence. In all struggles, the meanest, if he does his utmost, is of use; the drum-boy, eight years old, ought to imagine the battle rests on himself and his drum.' It did not matter to him what the subject was; whatever it might be, he brought the whole energy of his character to bear on it, and a few hours found him enthusiastic in its pursuit. While in Bermuda, the Colonel became a gardener, and at length was forced to give up the amusement, finding that it grew too engrossing. 'Why gardening has become so interesting to me here as to force me to give it up, lest neglect of business should follow; it is a kind of madness with me. Gardening from morning to night should be my occupation, if there was any one to command the regiment; it wont let me think of anything else. So hang the garden, and the sweet red and blue birds that swarm around; and hang dame Nature for making me love such

things, and women's company, more than the sublime pleasure of cutting people's throats and teaching young men to do so.' In Cephalonia he took to road-making, and he quickly came to love his road as heartily as he loved his horse. 'My wish is to be buried on the summit of Liberales, in the old chapel; not caring for church or chapel, but *to lie on the top of the road.* Many a poor mule's soul will say a good word for me at the last day, when they remember the old road.'

Such was the moral side of Sir Charles Napier's character; let us turn now to the intellectual.

His intellect was chiefly noticeable for its darting vigour and activity. He was one of the most versatile of men. His strong human sympathies, as we have seen, enfolded all sorts of things and people; so did his intellect. Nothing came amiss to that capacious and inventive brain. He discussed 'lawyers,' 'languages,' 'teaching,' the rights of labour, the maxims of government, the principles of taxation and finance, the position of the Church, the formation of roads, lighthouses, public buildings, with equal relish and ease. There is scarcely a single subject of interest that, in his letters and journals, he has not reasoned out; briefly, indeed, but with close logic and mastery. His conclusions were drawn rapidly, often abruptly; they were not unfrequently evolved from some detached detail that had fastened itself on his mind, but somehow they generally proved correct,—the details being instinctively referred to the operation of some leading

principle, and classified by the laws of sound common sense. I could quote many pregnant passages on each of the topics I have mentioned well worthy to be had in remembrance; the following, on the functions of the bench must suffice: 'The mere fact that a judge has deviated from the letter of the law, is a great evil; it draws with it an assumption of power, discretionary power, which it is the object of law to take away from a judge; *laws are made to prevent him from acting according to his conscience, and to force him to act according to law.*'

But Napier was not merely a man of intellectual vigour and versatility, he was pre-eminently a man of genius. There was, in whatever he put his hand to, a dash of the 'divine madness' of the Irishman and the poet. His letters and journals exhibit the speculative life of genius; and his practical life was genius in action. The public offices which he held required both military and civil capacity; let us consider him as the *soldier* and the *administator*.

First, as the administrator. Napier was governor of Cephalonia and Scinde, and at one time was on the eve of starting to assume the government of Australia.

To govern Australia constituted his earliest and most fondly cherished ambition; and the desire strikingly illustrates the originality and vastness of his conceptions. In many of his early letters and comments he, as it were, *rehearses* his career; showing *why* he would do what he subsequently *did* do; putting on a logical basis, so to speak, the scheme which he afterwards

carried out in practice. He lost the opportunity to realise his magnificent idea of an Australasian kingdom; but, judging from his career in Cephalonia and in Scinde, we are entitled to believe that his government of the new empire of the Antipodes would not have proved unsuccessful. 'Often,' says Sir William, 'he longed to govern Australia, then a mere receptacle for thieves, foreseeing that it might become a great state. When the vileness of the population was objected, he answered that Rome sprang from such a source, and it was an advantage, because benevolent despotism could be exercised without imputation of tyranny. His view was to raise a great community founded on sound monarchic principles, as a counterpoise in the world to the great advancing American republic.' 'I was mad,' he says himself, many years after the offer had been made, 'not to go out as governor of Australia. I could have founded a great kingdom, and by this time my whole plan would have been in full operation. Systematic education, abolition of primogeniture, the *Code Napoleon*. I would also have done my best to prevent the introduction of great manufactories, by promoting discussion on this simple question. How can they tend to the strength, the freedom, the happiness of a nation? They produce corrupt morals, bad health, uncertain wages, and dependence on a foreign market, instead of a strong and virtuous labouring class.'

Whatever may be thought of the economic value of certain of these details, no one can deny that the scheme was in itself a great and most striking conception. Pro-

bably, however, it was as well that it was not acted on. Napier would have been too strong and iron-handed for the community. A young colony generally arrives most speedily at healthy life when it is allowed to work out union and form from within. When good government is imposed from without, however humane and sagacious the governor may be, the lawless freedom, the uncurbed activity, which are required to take possession of and subdue a new world, are weakened and paralysed. The present incoherent state of Australian politics, the sowing of the 'wild oats' of its public life, contains perhaps the most confident assurance of the orderly future that is in store.

The day on which Napier reached the valley of the Indus he recognised its vast capabilities. He would bridle and subjugate the wild but noble river; make it the obedient handmaid of civilisation and commerce: tame it from its savage ways into order and decorum. On the ruins of the dynasty of the Ameers a new empire would arise, which, under the wise government of the English proconsul, should extend English liberty and English enterprise across the deserts of Scinde and the mountains of Beelochistan. 'Hyderabad should be made magnificent; yet Kurrachee should be my favourite. It should be made the mouth of the Indus, and that wild river should not stir from its bed without my leave; it should be chained like a malefactor; it should run close along the hills to Kurrachee, just giving me an elbow to Hyderabad.'

Many statesmen, however are very powerful on paper

who fail lamentably in practice. Sir Charles Napier did not belong to the class. He made Scinde a strong and tranquil province, and the details of his government there are most instructive. But the Cephalonian Government exhibits as strikingly, though on a small scale, the peculiarities of his administrative talent. That beautiful island, when he arrived, was in a lamentable state of prostration and decrepitude, induced by habitual neglect, extravagant abuse, and wilful misgovernment. He made it healthy and prosperous. He encouraged agriculture and commerce; his roads scaled its almost inaccessible ravines, and opened to the mountain tribes a pathway for their commerce to the sea. He built wharves, harbours, lighthouses; his great public works are still the boast of the island. Travellers who visited Cephalonia when under his rule, could with difficulty trace in its crowded seaports, its active agriculture, its intelligent and equitable administration of justice, its well-ordered society, any fragments of the wretched wreck which he had found.

The genius and honesty of a single man accomplished the transformation. *Honesty*, I say emphatically, for Napier's Cephalonian administration is specially important as showing the valuable results that a thoroughly honest man can achieve. He was a great and successful governor not only because he was an able man, but because—no fact comes out more clearly — he was an honest man. His conscience was as sound as his head. Let the administrative reformer lay this fact to heart. Unless in his scheme of reform he can devise some test

to secure administrative integrity as well as administrative intelligence, he will quickly learn that his dream of a perfect government is not in a fair way to be realised.

The Cephalonian administration is important also as demonstrating how difficult it is to secure large results, even from an intelligent policy, without constant personal supervision. Nothing was too minute for Napier's eagle-eye. He matured his plan with clearness and decision, and then accompanied it, through all its ramifications, with the most unwearied vigilance. The whole force and earnestness of his character was directed upon the general plan, and upon the most subordinate detail. Thus he kept in union and order the hidden wheels, without which the machine, however well constructed, cannot move.

Our Radical politicians do not probably admire Napier's system of government. He loved liberty indeed: but he loved its substance—not its shadow. So he allowed himself to be fettered by abstract theories as little as by red tape precedents. His government thus became a species of benevolent despotism; not a bad government for a decrepit society like Cephalonia, which needed the healthy stimulus of a masculine character like Napier's; not a bad government, when the despot can be relied on. 'The only things,' he says, 'that bore me, are the church and convent affairs; excepting, however, a beautiful nun of sixteen, who dislikes being one very much, and I have blowed up her old devil of an aunt, the abbess, for making her one. Nay, more!

I told the girl's friend that if she would run away with a handsome young Greek, I would, as head of the church, stand between her and all harm; my hope is she will do so, though my power, now martial law has ceased, is not quite so despotic as it was.' We dare to say the beautiful nun and the 'handsome young Greek' were not much afflicted by knowing that the 'despot' exercised a somewhat arbitrary authority, — neither are we.

To do justice to Sir Charles Napier's merits as a *soldier*, and to the various campaigns in which he was engaged, from Corunna to the Sutlej, would require a separate article, and does not lie within the scope of my present purpose. All that I am now concerned to show is, that imaginative power stamps his military as well as his civil career. He fought, as he wrote and governed—like a man of genius.

It was an accident that made young Napier a soldier; and he entertained a strong natural antipathy to the military profession. The strictness of its discipline was repugnant to the affluent sympathies of the man, to the liberal instincts of the citizen. And this great master of the art detested bloodshed. He was never at rest except in action; and yet, with his whole heart, he yearned for peace. 'Peace, blessed Peace!' is his constant aspiration. When in command of the northern district of England, during the Chartist disturbances in 1840, he could not repress his bitter indignation at the rash levity with which the magistrates were disposed on all occasions to bring the people and the troops

face to face; forgetting, as he said, that there was a civil authority between the two, and that the soldier should be appealed to only as an ultimate tribunal, when the police had been tried and failed. All war was hateful to him; but a servile war, a war of classes, would have been misery. 'Battle! Victory!' he exclaims, 'Oh! spirit-stirring words in the bosom of society, but to me, O God! how my heart rejects them. That dreadful work of blood, sickening even to look on: not one feeling of joy or exaltation entered my head at Dubba or Meeanee: all was agony, I can use no better word. A longing never to have quitted Celbridge, to have passed my life in the round field, and the "devil's acre," and under the dear yew-trees on the terrace among the sparrows: these were the feelings which flashed in my head after the battles. But away with these feelings! let me go to work, let me sink in harness if so God pleases: he who flinches from work, in battle or out of it, is a coward.' Noble old man!

Yet war was his true vocation. If ever any one was born for war, Charles Napier was the man. He studied its theory from boyhood. He followed Alexander from the Granicus to the Indus, and critically analysed the structure of his campaigns. He had meditated profoundly upon the large principles and strategic laws of war before he was required to put them in practice. The maxims which he evolved in the study were the principles which he afterwards illustrated in the field. And in this, as in everything else—but in this pre-emi-

nently—he went at once, with direct decisive insight, to the root of the matter. To the professional student his disquisitions on strategy must prove invaluable: even to the general reader—the laws which regulate a military campaign being not remotely derived from those which rule the still larger campaign of life—they are full of interest. 'A commander should concentrate his own forces, divide his enemies, and never think himself strong enough when he can be stronger. Yet he should remember that additional numbers do not always give strength. Always attack if you cannot avoid an action. If your enemy is strongest, fall on his weakest points, and avoid his strong ones. If you are more powerful, fasten on his vitals, and destroy him. If he is strong, provoke him to separate; if he is weak, drive him into a corner.' These maxims were penned many years before he went to the East: his Scindian campaign was their application.

Another fact illustrates this natural aptitude for the military profession. His enthusiastic love for natural beauty is very noticeable; and many of his descriptions of scenery are admirable:—'The vast precipices above and below, the overhanging rocks of stupendous magnitude, the wild savage appearance of nature, mingled with all that is beautiful, so far as wood, water, rocks, clouds, snow, ice, rainbows, storms, in all their variety, can make beauty. . . . The Tyrol has another kind of beauty. There the road winds north and south, and the sun at noonday throws such strong lights and shadows as I never saw equalled; one mountain is

black as jet, and just beyond it out starts a vast jutting mass of granite, many thousand feet high, covered with mosses, brushwood, pines, coloured earth and slabs, all as brilliant as diamonds under a strong sun. . . . Those gems of bright waters in their rude mountain setting, bursting on one's sight in fresh changing forms, with all their lights and shadows, their mists and showers, exhilarate the spirits, and give a calmness and happiness to the aching mind which seems like the peace of Heaven still lingering on earth, though driven from the usual haunts of men.' He had thus a fine eye for the picturesque in a country; but after a deep-drawn breath of admiration, he turned instinctively to its military character. The pass is not only grand and striking; it is the place where a handful might resist a host. The plain is not merely a fertile and richly wooded amphitheatre; it is the field which opposing armies select for battle. It is very interesting in this light to accompany him to Greece, and follow him step by step from one Hellenic battlefield to another. A singular spectacle! The science of the new world testing, by reference to the unchangeable facts of nature, the prudence, the heroism, and the capacity of the old. It is indeed no common treat to be present while one of Wellington's captains estimates, from the modern soldier's point of view, the military capabilities of Marathon and Thermopylæ.

We say that, as a soldier, Napier was a man of genius, and his military acts are *poetic*,—masterly as a thorough soldier's, and yet imaginative. Very good generals there have been, steady, prosaic, commonplace men, who have

done their work prudently and effectively; but the great captains, Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Napoleon, Wellington, Napier, were made of different stuff. One or two incidents from the career of the latter will illustrate this brilliant originality.

In 1818 we were at war with America: a war which we conducted by making desultory descents upon the eastern seaboard,—sacking a village here, burning a homestead there. Out of this petty contention, Napier's plan of war rises large and portentous. He asked to be landed on the coast of Carolina with a single regiment of English soldiers. At its head he undertook in six months to raise the whole slave population; and, in the shape of the Southern States, exact a 'material guarantee' which might bring the Republic to reason. His information led him to believe that his scheme was feasible, and we hesitate to say that it was not. Considering the condition of society, the imperfect communication, and the great extent of waste land, depopulated, or peopled only by the slave-owner and his hostile dependents, in these States; this, in any defensive war, is evidently even to-day the weak point of the Republic. The free activities of the North oppose to foreign aggression an impenetrable front; can as much be confidently predicted of the hollow and decayed societies of the South?

The general conception of the first Scindian campaign was masterly. Napier, indeed, underrated the prowess of the Beloochee chivalry; but this was an error that only experience could rectify, and it

was an error, besides, which has secured him imperishable fame; for had he been undeceived in time, the splendid spectacle of a handful of English troopers rushing at Meeanee and Dubba upon twenty times their own number of fierce, well-trained, and courageous warriors, would never have been witnessed. But in every other respect the strategy was consummate. The situation was difficult. The time was limited. The hot months were approaching, and before they arrived the campaign must be won. Napier was therefore obliged to bring his quarrel with the Ameers to an immediate issue. But it was in their power to scatter their retainers without coming to an actual engagement; make for the Eastern desert on the one hand, or, crossing the Indus on the other, gain the mountains of Beloochistan; and then reunite and attack his little force when the heat had set in, and it was impossible for Europeans to keep the field. All these possibilities he foiled. He destroyed their desert retreat; he cut them off from the river; and before the ramparts of Hyderabad, their capital, and the only place where—it had struck him from the first—he could with any certainty bring this Arab-like race to bay, he fought the battle of Meeanee.

But the most striking and original incident in the campaign, and the one which most rivets and fascinates the imagination, is the march upon the desert sanctuary of Emaun Ghur. Along the eastern border of Scinde lies a barren desert—Regeestan, or the Land of Sand, the natives call it. According to the notion they enter-

tained before Napier came, the desert presented an impenetrable barrier to European troops, who could not live among its thirsty and barren steppes. Consequently, whenever they wished to evade an engagement or baffle a foe, the Arab race struck their tents and disappeared amid the dust of the wilderness. Emaun Ghur—the stronghold of the northern, as Omercote was of the southern Ameers—lay one hundred miles from the fertile Indus valley, in the heart of this desert; and so long as the princes could retreat with impunity to their lion-like lair, Napier felt that it was impossible to attack them with success. He determined to destroy this security, and with it the *prestige* of the desert; prove to his foes that there was no mountain however rugged, no desert however inhospitable, where the English soldier could not track them out. He keenly appreciated indeed the danger of a military march across the wilderness; amid its waves of loose sand, which a breath of wind could stir into swift and terrible hostility; where there was neither food for his camels nor water for his men. 'I am fully aware of the danger of these marches into the desert,' he says, 'but the thing may be done; what one man does another may do. I ought to have quiet thoughts,' he goes on, 'and cannot, for I am throwing myself into a desert, and must not think of John' (his nephew, who had been wounded), 'or I may involve all under me in disaster and disgrace. This is a hard trial for an old man of sixty: it shakes me to the foundation. Yet what signifies these troubles? I feel a spring in me that defies all difficulties. The time

of life is short, but to spend that shortness vainly 'twere too long! This thought must urge me to resolution, and resolution is half the battle!' So mounting on camels a hundred of his troopers, he cast himself boldly upon the wilderness; and, after a three days' march amid waste sandhills skirted with the scanty desert vegetation, and clothed with loose sea-shells, 'mussels, cockles, and the spiral unicorn,' débris of some primeval flood, he reached the great fortress, which he found evacuated, and which he utterly destroyed. It was a perilous and intrepid exploit; his biographer compares it with Marius's descent on Jugurtha's town of Capsa; to ourselves, in its silence and rapidity it recalls Montrose's winter march across the Grampians to the country of Argyle. In either case the effect was decisive: the sense of confident security was destroyed.

Montrose—Napier's most renowned ancestor—was the last of the courtly Cavaliers. Yet his descendant contrived to preserve in *his* wars a dash of the antique chivalry. The Plutarchian hero, however, and not the fine gentleman of the *beau monde*, was the model after which he had been cast; and his wilful humour, his rugged eccentricity, his impracticable honesty, prevented the society to which he belonged from recognising the essentially chivalrous nobleness of his disposition. In no respect was this more conspicuously manifested than in the estimate it induced him to form of his military opponents. He acknowledged with enthusiasm the imperial genius of Napoleon, and bitterly resented the shame of his captivity. During the Scindian war, he

invariably restored their swords to the beaten chieftains; and he rendered generous justice to the soldierly qualities of the 'Lion'—the noblest and most warlike of his warlike race. He delighted to recognise and reward deeds of genuine valour, by whomsoever performed. 'At Dubba also, as at Meeanee,' he exclaims, 'a leader, the same at both, and worthy of all praise, animated the fight—Hoche Mohamed Seedee, an Abyssinian slave! Heroic in strength of body and mind, this brave man and his brother slaves, who formed the domestic guard of the Ameers, forced their dastard lords to fight at Meeanee; then, having vainly opposed their final surrender, sought the Lion; and at Dubba, fighting with unbounded fury, fell to the last man under the bayonets of the 22nd Regiment.' There is in these words the generous glow, the eloquent enthusiasm of the born gentleman, who detects the hero in the slave.

Sir Charles's career was peculiar in many ways—most peculiar perhaps in this, that it began when the majority of those who started along with him were in their graves. He was past sixty before he held any great command. When sent to Scinde he was an old man. 'It will be sorrowful,' he says on that occasion, 'to leave you all, for it is late in life, and I am much worn. I am now past fifty-nine, and for this command should be thirty-nine. Oh! for forty, as at Cephalonia, where I laughed at eighteen hours' hard work on foot, under a burning sun; now, at sixty, how far will my carcase carry me?—no great distance; well, to try is

glorious.' This feeling in his later years often came uppermost—how much he had to do, and how short the time in which to do it. It oppressed him to know that he was sixty—an old man, with a great empire to conquer and consolidate. Remembering the things he did, and the memorable name he secured, after the elastic vigour of manhood was departed,—what would he not have achieved had he been earlier entrusted with the conduct of great affairs?

In this resolute spirit did the old man toil on till his death,—honourably, intelligently, conscientiously. Such an example invests mature life with a finer charm than commonly attaches to it. Disguise it as we may, the grey hairs to which we hasten are too often a crown, not of glory, but of sorrow and scorn. The great lawyer, the great general, and the great poet, sink into dotage and decay. They may bequeath great names and great books; but what do these avail them? To the man who feels how infinitely more valuable a true *life* is than even the best and truest of deeds and writings, this phenomenon of mental destruction,—the crash of the system,—must remain a perplexing problem. Is this the end of all—'the blackness of thick darkness,'—or, at best, childishness, weakness, oblivion? Very other was the old age of Napier. He fought great battles, governed great provinces, achieved a great name, long after that period had passed when, according to an antique morality not quite exploded, it behoves men to lay aside the things of the present life, and to prepare their 'souls' for the next. Sir Charles, who knew of

no special preparation for the other world better than doing his work well in this—and that kind of religion he had practised all his life—worked on early and late, in season and out of season, till the day of his death. His eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated. But at length the battered body could not keep pace any longer with the keen, undaunted, untiring spirit,—

> The fiery soul, which, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.

So the campaign has ended, and the veteran, after his hard work, sleeps well,—*ubi saeva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.* I have said of him what I conscientiously believe to be the truth; not caring, however, to dwell at length on minor blemishes and infirmities of temper. There were such, no doubt; what man of woman born has them not?—but I am content to bequeath them in their integrity to the microscopic critics of the press. For to myself he remains only one of our greatest and most thoroughly honest men,—one of the men who are the salt of the earth, the salvation of a corrupt society. We have lost the man; we cannot afford to lose his example. After the hideous disclosures of wide-spread demoralisation among all classes in this community which the past years have witnessed, one is tempted anxiously to enquire—How many of these men remain? How many of whom it can be said, 'Peradventure, if I find in Sodom ten

righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes'?

My turn came. 'These brilliant men,' I said, 'dazzle and confuse us. The good and the evil are so mixed together in their natures, that it is difficult to be sure of our footing. I am going to select a homelier type,—my hero is a Scottish parson;' and thereupon I read them this sketch of a plain north-country minister:—

ROBERTSON OF ELLON.

THOSE who have occasionally entered the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland during the last thirty years must have been familiar with one quaint and grotesque figure. There is a capital sketch by Richard Doyle—made about the year '48—which is still to be found in the collections of those who are interested in the curious felicities of caricature. It represents *Punch* telling the members of the House of Commons 'to go about their business.' The leaders—Russell, Palmerston, Joseph Hume, Cobden, upon the Liberal; Peel, Sir James Graham, Disraeli, Lord George Bentinck, Sibthorpe, upon the Opposition benches—regard their vivacious Mentor with an expression of amused but languid interest. The little gentleman is stamping upon the floor, and gesticulating vehemently. With a slight change of circumstance, the sketch might be taken to represent the General Assembly of the Kirk during one of Professor Robertson's characteristic harangues. Of his figure, the figure of *Punch* could hardly be called a caricature. Hugh Miller said that ships of the line were sometimes cut down to frigates, and that the minister of Ellon was a very large man cut down to less than the middle size. His head was too large for his body; his body was too large for his legs. His limbs, indeed, were as ludicrously out of shape and proportion as the limbs of the Black Dwarf, whom, in fact, he

rather resembled. He was as short, as swarthy, as sinewy, as shrewd, as sarcastic, as the recluse of Mucklestane Moor, and his voice was as prodigiously shrill and powerful. Altogether, the man was one not easily to be forgotten. The coarse white hair, which stood bolt upright; the round red face, with its capacious forehead; the bullet head; the fat swollen hands, clenched, and working unconsciously as he proceeded with his argument; the strong north-country accent; the harsh voice, which grated on the ear like the cry of a land-rail, sometimes sinking into a muffled whisper, and sometimes rising into a shriek as startling as the scream of a railway-whistle, produced a most singular impression. The orator, so far as externals went, might have been readily mistaken for a Buchan farmer, or a Highland drover. While in repose, the drooping under lip indicated weariness or pain, but the eye was bright and penetrating, and watchful. From the eye alone, indeed, was it possible for a stranger to learn that this misshapen body harboured a dauntless soul, and a peculiarly subtle and inquisitive intellect. Perhaps it was still more difficult for those who did not know him to believe that this tortuous reasoner, this brusque, intricately-ingenious, sharply-ironical, hard-hitting controversialist was warmed by a love strong as Melancthon's, was animated by a faith fervent as Luther's, was at heart one of the meekest, most tender, gentle, and long-suffering of men. When Robertson wrote of 'the quickening and burning spirit of light and love struggling to unearth itself,' he as nearly as possible de-

scribed the conditions under which he endeavoured to accomplish the work which had been allotted to him, and which he cheerfully and steadfastly undertook.

James Robertson was the son of a Scotch farmer; and no country except Scotland could have given birth to, and found a fit vocation for, such a man. His father rented the farm of Ardlaw, near Pitsligo, in Buchan. The district of Buchan is one of the dreariest in the north. The country is flat; cover is scanty; there is neither hill nor tree, scarcely a hedgerow, visible for fifty miles. It has plenty of sea, however; the German Ocean lies along two sides of the triangle which the district forms; and the long sandy beaches where the tarrock breeds, and which the curlew haunts, are broken by ranges of granite cliffs,—not very lofty, at least as compared with some of the cliffs along the Scotch seaboard, but fashioned by the action of the waves into picturesque and fantastic groups. But though the aspect of the country is not particularly propitious, the industry and intelligence of its people have converted a barren and unprotected headland into a fruitful depôt. Buchan is now one of the great feeding districts of Scotland, and some of the finest cattle which find their way to the markets of the south are bred between the Don and the Deveron. William Robertson, however, was not one of its opulent farmers; at the time of his son's birth he rented only about fifty acres; yet upon the scanty produce of this patch of land the thrifty yeoman managed to rear and educate a numerous family, and to give his eldest son, James, a 'college course.' He

himself, and every member of his family, worked like ordinary agricultural labourers upon the farm—ploughed, sowed, reaped, and *thrashed*. James and his brothers and sisters were sent, in the first instance, to the village school, where the small, old-fashioned, awkward-looking lad rapidly picked up the elements of knowledge. As a boy, he was sharp, quick, and resolute; commonly at the head of his class; very difficult to beat at anything he undertook; the pride of the parish schoolmaster, and the pet of his family, especially of his mother—one of those simple pious matrons, of those born gentlewomen, not unfrequently met with among the Scottish peasantry. A characteristic anecdote is told of these early years. One winter day, while the children were at school, a heavy snow-storm had fallen, and the snow had drifted thickly along the Ardlaw road. It was proposed that the elder ones should return to the farm, but that Maggie, the youngest, should be left at a neighbouring cottage. Maggie, however, resolutely opposed the arrangement, and began to sob, when her sturdy little brother—who had always a very soft heart, and neither as boy nor man could bear to see a 'bairn greeting'—turned back, took her on his back, and carried her 'hame through the drift.'

'James Robertson was sent to the University of Aberdeen when he was barely twelve.' This sentence is, I dare say, calculated to surprise the English reader. That people in the position of the Robertsons should think of sending a son to college, or that a lad should be considered prepared for a University career when

only twelve years old, are statements which may not unnaturally excite the incredulity of those who are unacquainted with the habits and customs of the Scot. Both of these facts, however, are very characteristic of the relations maintained by the Scottish peasantry to the Scottish Universities, and to the Scottish Church. The ambition of a Scottish yeoman is to see his son in the pulpit. When the Samuel of her flock has become 'a settled minister,' the Hannah of the Aberdeenshire or Forfarshire farm 'toun' can die happy. To attain this object father and mother cheerfully resign the simple luxuries of rustic life, even contrive sometimes to press its necessaries into an incredibly narrow compass. But their saving and pinching, the protracted daily struggle from the day of their marriage until the morning when David, in the full-blown glory of gown and bands, mounts the pulpit-stairs in his native parish, would be fruitless, were it not that the University—where the lad who studies for the Church is required to spend seven or eight sessions—is not unsuited to the narrowest income. The student at Aberdeen or St. Andrew's can live upon a pittance. Some interesting particulars of the manner in which James Robertson lived at Aberdeen have been preserved. He rented the *half* of a garret in the Gallowgate, for which he paid the sum of eighteen pence a week. His food came from the farm; his clothes were sent home to be washed. The weekly carrier brought him a box from Ardlaw, filled with potatoes, eggs, oatmeal cakes, and 'his washing.' During his first session his outlay for food, fees, and coach-hire did not amount

to eight pounds. The whole sum paid for fees during his literary career was only twenty-two pounds eight shillings, a sum more than covered by the 'bursaries' which he gained. The session at a Scottish University lasts from November till April, about six months. During the summer months a student in the position of James Robertson returns home, where he engages in the ordinary work of the farm, until it is time to renew the mathematical and classical studies. The system is a curious one; but it is one eminently adapted to the circumstances of the peasantry, and it cannot be said to have failed. The boy begins his college career indeed at too early an age; poor parents are of course anxious that a son should be able to do something for himself by the time he is eighteen or twenty; and the classical training is consequently imperfect. But the system produces great mathematicians (within a period of four years Aberdeen students have thrice carried off the highest honour that Cambridge bestows), and philosophy and theology are, and have been, as a rule, committed to eminent masters. Students who have listened to Hamilton, and Wilson, and Chalmers, have listened to teachers whose fame is in all the schools; and teachers like Ferrier, and Tulloch, and Brewster are not unworthy of their most eminent predecessors. The system which brings the son of the poorest crofter within the immediate influence of men like these, which opens a career to the son of the hard-working peasant, which allows him to gratify his thirst for knowledge, which gives him access to the treasures

of great libraries, and to the society of scholars and philosophers, and men of science, is a system of which learned ignorance alone can speak with disrespect, and that has done good service to the nation which it has trained.

A Church which is recruited from the ranks of the peasantry cannot expect that its clergy should be men of very wide cultivation, or of very exact scholarship; and reformers who prefer these accomplishments to clear heads and sound hearts, would no doubt gladly see such men excluded. But it may be doubted how far their exclusion would conduce to the advantage of the Church. To a certain extent, perhaps, the system has a tendency to foster intellectual narrowness among the clergy. The lad who has been bred at the parish school, who has been tied to his mother's apron-strings, who has read scarcely any books except his grammar, his Bible, the *Fourfold State*, and the few tattered remnants of Calvinistic divinity—the traditions of Covenant times—which lie on the parlour shelf, who, when at college, has lived like an anchorite, at the top of an interminable stair, who has never mixed in society, who is unacquainted with the prevailing tone of thought among his contemporaries; such a lad is much more likely, when he enters the ministry, to become arrogant, intolerant, and vulgarly conceited than the man whose mind has been expanded by liberal accomplishments, and by the invaluable experiences of active life. There is the risk of this evil, undoubtedly; still, on the whole, the association has been beneficial. It has brought the

Church and the people into familiar and intimate union. The Church of England rests upon its intellectual supremacy, its ritual elevation, its historical traditions. It is the natural expression of a great, free, wealthy, powerful, liberal people—of a people whose feelings are merciful, and whose principles are tolerant. The Church of Scotland is the expression of a narrower earnestness, and of a simpler, perhaps ruder taste; but for these very reasons it has been, and continues to be the Church of the peasantry. It has no room within its borders for a Locke, a Jowett, or a Tennyson; but the peasant apostles of a peasant Church—which has had its peasant martyrs—understand the genius and convictions of the people. The divinity schools of Scotland, if they have not produced a dynasty of eminent divines, have nourished a race of sturdy writers and thinkers, somewhat slovenly in their letters, somewhat uncouth in their intellectual habit, but clear-headed, resolute, sagacious, loving the people from whom they spring, and loved by the people to whom they minister.

After his college career was concluded, James Robertson became successively parish schoolmaster of Pitsligo, and head master of Gordon's Hospital in Aberdeen. The founder of the latter institution vested a sort of patriarchal authority in the head master, who is required 'to see that the children and servants be brought up and instructed in the fear of God, and therefore he shall every Lord's day and Thursday, some time in the afternoon, catechise and instruct the children and servants in the common ground and principles of

faith and Christian religion contained in the Scriptures of truth.' Robertson, as head master, was a rugged edition of Arnold. He inculcated the same principles, he appealed to the same motives—manliness, honesty, honour, Christian uprightness. He did not, however, occupy this post for any long time. In 1831 Lord Aberdeen presented him to the living of Ellon. At Ellon he remained until 1843, when, after the disruption, he was appointed to the chair of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Edinburgh. The years he spent at Ellon were probably the happiest of his life.

Ellon is prettily situated between the broad stream of the Ythan and a range of wooded heights crowned by the turrets of the old castle of the Gordons. The village is quiet, old-fashioned, neat, and respectable; with its shaded walks, and well-trimmed gardens, and whitewashed cottages, bearing more resemblance to an English village than any other in that bleak district. During the ten years of his ministry at Ellon, Robertson made himself universally beloved. He was an unwearied visitor—he knew each of his people by headmark—he was their adviser in business, and their comforter in distress. In the barn and at the farm fireside, in summer and in winter, he gathered his flock about him, to advise, to exhort, to examine, to rebuke. Some of them were at first inclined to resent these inquisitorial visitations; one old woman declared that she 'wadna gang to be heckled, and hae her taes drapping aff wi' the cauld;' but the minister's untiring zeal

triumphed over every impediment. It was impossible to resist the assaults of that hearty and vehement little man.

The character of this parish minister was one that could not fail to interest those who had the opportunity of studying it. Robertson's was a singularly open, ingenious, teachable mind; ardent, busy, and inquisitive. He could not well help being a Calvinist, but he was no bigot. He was profoundly religious, but never fanatical. He had the old Puritans' perfect confidence in God's government, their vivid sense of a close relation with the unseen; to him, as to them, the trials of life were divinely appointed, and 'at the end of all exists the Great Hope,' but there was no narrowness in his creed. When in Aberdeen, he drew up a series of remarkable 'resolutions.' A certain place is paved with good intentions, but Robertson's resolutions were worked into his life, and form a truthful commentary on his career. 'Although I consider it a sacred duty,' he says in the twelfth, 'which I owe to God, to allow no consideration of authority, however high, which does not alter my convictions, to interfere with opinions which I have coolly and deliberately formed, yet it shall ever be a principal object of my care to keep my ears open to the reception of truth; to behave towards those who entertain sentiments different from my own with the utmost temperance and modesty; to venerate the hoary head of age, and to weigh well its sage counsels before I commit myself by action in opposition to them; *and above all, to guard against the too prevalent error of*

representing those who differ from me as sinning against their own consciences, by maintaining opinions which, although they may appear to me to be alike unreasonable and pernicious, may, for aught I can positively show to the contrary, be honestly professed by the people by whom they are advocated.' Humble, and yet thoroughly independent, loving truth intensely, and yet never speaking an evil word, nor thinking a bitter thought of an adversary, Robertson stands almost alone on the field of theological controversy. And this combination of elements seldom found in union, is characteristic of his mental structure throughout. He loved the people, and identified himself with their interests, yet he could not become an ecclesiastical demagogue. His temper was characteristically shrewd and wary, yet, in certain aspects, he might be called a mystic. Crabbe and Coleridge were his favourite poets; and in his own character he united homely sagacity with vague, obscure, and somewhat Utopian aspirations. 'Life is more than logic,' he used to say, 'and the understanding but deals with the surface of the human being.' He united, moreover, an ardent zeal with a rare and admirable temperance. His faith was fervent, yet his views were moderate and liberal. He once rose in the Assembly, and assured his astonished brethren that he approved of the grant to Maynooth; but none of them ventured to suggest, as is usual in such cases, that he was 'an assailant of the truth and an enemy of his Lord.' 'I am not prepared,' he said, 'to admit that the consequences of the Catholic Emancipation Bill have been

pernicious. I know that there are disturbances in Ireland; but when I look back to the progress of Protestantism and civilisation, I see that the vessel of our own Protestant Church was rocked amid many storms. I know that when men come forward, keenly maintaining political rights, they are necessarily learning something; and when in addition to political power we give them education, we do all that, in present circumstances, under Providence, we are permitted to do to bring them forward in the scale of intelligence and civilisation.' Those only who are familiar with the intense repugnance to Popery which prevails among the lower classes and the religious bodies in Scotland, will be able to estimate aright the intrepidity which avowed, and the intellectual fairness and honesty of judgment which, in spite of hostile associations, contrived to arrive at such an opinion.

It was frequently said that Robertson was inconsistent; that he could not be trusted. The accusation in one sense was deserved: the bigots and zealots of ecclesiastical politics could not depend upon him. His intellect was too subtle, too inquisitive, too cautious to enable him to become an effective partisan. He would not wilfully blind his eyes—he saw on every side of a question—and he refused to believe that black was white, or that white was black, at the bidding of any party. Hugh Miller said that Robertson of Ellon might have led a mob; but the remark showed an imperfect comprehension of his character. No man was ever less suited to lead a mob, either of people or of priests. He

had indeed a great and noble zeal for truth, and purity, and honesty, and uprightness,—a zeal which, like Jackson's, might have animated an army; but the subtlety of his intellect disqualified him for popular rule. His subjects would have deposed him in a week. Even his warmest admirers must admit that, while the frankest and most transparent honesty characterised his moral nature, his mental processes were involved and intricate, not unfrequently perplexing and enigmatical. It cannot be denied, however, that, when at his best, he was a great and solid reasoner. 'I have observed,' Benjamin Franklin says, 'that men of good sense seldom fall into a disputatious turn of conversation, except lawyers, university men, and, generally, men of all sorts *who have been bred at Edinburgh*.' The observation might have been made more general; and Robertson, like most of his countrymen, keenly relished an argument. His conversation was argumentative: his sermons—even those he addressed to the Ellon ploughmen—were copiously argumentative; and his speeches in Synod and Assembly were uncouth masses of argument, of prolonged and ingenious reasoning. Yet he united with this intensely logical habit, 'this contentious and wrangling turn,' as Franklin calls it, a fervid power of appeal, and no mean declamatory ability.

Though a rhetorician, Robertson had little fancy. But there is a glow about his style: both his spoken and written words seem sometimes to burn. 'If veins fill up fissures,' he writes, 'the solid heavy matter of

which I am composed has had too much tenacity to split and make room for poetry.' Yet he possessed, or was possessed by, a certain ardour of spirit which sometimes closely approached the inspiration of the imagination. While speaking on certain subjects his eye lighted up with more than the poet's fire. His nature was singularly affectionate; and when death entered and divided the united household, the cry of the bereaved heart found expression in solemn and touching words. 'I bless my God,' he writes, in early life, on the death of a brother, 'that he gave me such a brother; and although he was called away in the bloom of youth and the spring of manhood; I cheerfully submit to the will of a higher power, and am content to wander about in this dreary wilderness a few years longer till the glorious moment arrives when the sinking pulse and throbbing brow shall throw open the palace of the soul.' The story of his stepson's (Robert Douglass) death is related in his letters with touches of natural pathos, and of vehement sorrow and affection. 'God knows,' he says to the dying boy, 'that I love you beyond all power of expression, that you are dear to me as my own son, dear to me as my own soul. May the Lord bless you, my dearest boy, and cause the light of his countenance to shine upon you!' 'If you should be called away, my dearest son, from ministering in the earthly sanctuary, I do fervently pray, and I do confidingly believe, that a higher and holier sphere of duty will be assigned to you in the sanctuary which is above.' Then the end comes. 'Well, on Friday

night, or rather about two o'clock in the morning, while it was still quite dark, he pointed to the same spot on the wall, and asked Miss Perry to look at the beautiful sun which was just appearing above the horizon. He declared earnestly that he had never before witnessed a sun-rising so exceedingly beautiful, and that he felt also a freshness and fragrance in the morning air which he had never experienced on any former occasion. I rejoice with my whole heart that I can most thoroughly believe that our dearest boy's brightest anticipations have been more than fulfilled; that he has seen the rising of the Sun of everlasting righteousness; that he has breathed, in the world of glorified spirits, the fragrant balm of an eternal morn.' James Douglass, another stepson, fell in the Indian mutiny. 'James is still so constantly in our minds,' he writes, after the news arrived, 'that the remembrance of him is mingled with all our thoughts. I often find myself, when alone, literally crying out for him, and moved to stretch out my arms as if I could embrace him.' 'Our friends,' he says, in a letter written a year or two before his own death, 'are fast mustering in the Court above. Not a few of the objects of our warmest affection are already there; and could I but feel myself prepared—could I but see my work done—I do think I would long to be with them. It is sad, indeed, to look on the dissolved and dissolving earthly tabernacle; but there is a thrilling pleasure in the thought that the ransomed spirit, once imprisoned in this tabernacle, and subject to all its toils, and pains, and endless weari-

nesses, has at length burst its bars, and now rejoices in the perfect freedom of the sons of God.' The language of the Bible has been of late so degraded and vulgarised by the manner in which it has been manipulated by the religious public, by the editors of religious journals, and the writers of religious biographies, that men of cultivated taste require occasionally to be reminded that there are Christians like Dr. Robertson yet left in the world,—Christians in whose simple and natural use of scriptural words and images there is not a hint of affectation, nor a trace of faction.

Robertson had been settled for several years at Ellon before his name began to be widely known throughout the Church. Had he been born in ordinary times it is probable that he might have lived and died, leaving behind him only the local reputation of a faithful parish minister. But he lived in an age of controversy,—of a controversy which was peculiarly fitted to exercise and to display his fluent and copious logic. The noise of a great contest was heard throughout Scotland, and the humble minister of Ellon was destined to undertake a foremost part in the fight.

The memory of the great 'Non-intrusion' controversy, even across the Tweed, begins to wax dim. It raged for ten years; it was conducted with incredible bitterness; it divided families; it parted the closest friends; it rent the Church in twain. The one party were denounced because they had defied the law; the other because they had betrayed their Lord. It must be admitted that the 'Non-intrusionists' had the best of the

invective. The *anathema maranatha* of an aroused theologian has always been an effective form of scolding. Rebellion is, no doubt, a rather serious matter; but it is clear that men 'who enrol themselves under the banner of the enemies of God,' and who 'barter Christ's crown and covenant from slavish fear of temporal power,' must be in a much worse condition. It is a great thing when you can threaten your adversary with the police magistrate; but when, arming yourself with weapons borrowed from the arsenal of vituperative divines, you threaten him with the displeasure of the Almighty, you become invulnerable.

The origin of this conflict was the Veto Act. By the constitution of the Church of Scotland the patron of a benefice is entitled, when a vacancy occurs, to present any duly qualified minister, or licentiate of the Church, to the vacant charge. The people, if they do not like him, are entitled to object; and the Presbytery of the bounds are entitled to consider, and give effect to the objections, if these are substantial and substantiated. Thus, in the words of Sir Henry Moncrieff, 'it is the office of the patron to present, of the people to object, and of the Church to judge.' But the Veto Act, which was carried by Lord Moncrieff in the Assembly of 1834, provided that when a majority of the people simply objected to a presentee, the Presbytery, without making trial of his qualifications, were to refuse to induct him. Thus the Veto Act, in effect, deprived the patron of his right to present, and the Church courts of their right to judge. A great change was in one day effected in the

character and constitution of the Church. Had the change concerned purely spiritual functions alone, it is possible that it might have been acquiesced in even by those who disliked it most. But patronage was an ancient civil right, in the enjoyment of which the Scottish landowners and laity were interested, and it was unlikely that they would relinquish its exercise without a struggle. The Act, in fact, had hardly been passed before its legality was impeached. The Earl of Kinnoull presented Mr. Robert Young to the parish of Auchterarder, and a majority of the people vetoed him. The Presbytery, although the law of the land declared that 'Presbyteries were bound and astricted to receive and admit whatsomever qualified minister presented by his Majesty or other laick patrons,' refused to make trial of his qualifications. The once famous 'Auchterarder Case' was the result. A large majority of the Court of Session declared that the Veto Act was illegal. This view was supported by the venerable Lord President Hope, by the Lord Justice Clerk Boyle, by Lord Mackenzie, and by Lord Medwyn, who illustrated it with a wealth of antiquarian and patristic learning. Lord Moncrieff, Lord Jeffrey, and Lord Cockburn were ranged upon the opposite side. But it must be remembered that these judges had been all, more or less, committed at an early period to the view which they espoused on the bench. Lord Moncrieff was the author of the Veto Act; and Jeffrey and Cockburn had respectively, when Lord-Advocate and Solicitor-General, declared their approbation of a measure which, as a rule,

was acquiesced in by their political adherents. The case was taken to the House of Lords, and there, in the highest judicial tribunal of the country, the views of the majority of the Scottish judges were without hesitation affirmed.

The law was thus clearly laid down, and those who had appealed to the law (as the Non-intrusion party had done when they carried the cause to the House of Lords) ought in consistency to have abided by its award. Two courses, indeed, were open to them: they might either have obeyed the law, or they might have quitted a Church which had been found to rest upon what they considered an unscriptural basis. They chose a third course—they defied the law, but they remained in the Church. The courts of law, they declared, had no jurisdiction in the matter. Cæsar, in the shape of the House of Lords, was not their master,—the Lord Jesus was the head of his Church. The exercise of patronage was a purely spiritual function, and the spiritual independence of their Zion was in danger. So the General Assembly enjoined the Presbyteries to disobey the law as it had been authoritatively laid down. The conflict thereafter assumed another aspect. It became a struggle between the supreme and the inferior ecclesiastical courts. The Earl of Fife presented Mr. John Edwards to the parish of Marnoch. As he was vetoed by a majority of the parishioners, the Presbytery hesitated to induct him. At length, after the Court of Sessions had declared that they were 'bound and astricted' to do so, they resolved to obey the law. The Assembly first suspended, and then deposed the members of the Pres-

bytery. But they were supported by the whole constitutional party in the Church, and the Court of Session prohibited their opponents from molesting them in the performance of their duties. Thus the struggle, by the violent and headstrong assertion of an untenable position, became a struggle for life or death. The 'High Party' had undertaken to defy the law, and as a necessary consequence, they were forced to punish those who respected and obeyed it. The issue of such a struggle, in a country where an orderly respect for law prevails, could not be doubtful. The Non-intrusionists were forced, in 1843, to retire from the establishment. It would have been well for their reputation had they done so six years earlier. Had they withdrawn when the judgment in the Auchterarder case was pronounced, though their ranks might have been less densely crowded, they would have left with clean hands, and without the bitter consciousness of being worsted in a doubtful contest. As it was, they did not leave the Church until they had made it too hot to hold them, and until they had demonstrated that the spirit of ecclesiastical intolerance, the spirit of Calvin and of Hildebrand, had not been effectually exorcised.

The Non-intrusion party left the Church; but they left it declaring that they took 'religion' along with them. They said, 'We are the Church of Scotland—we inherit its doctrines—we administer its sacraments—we dispense its ordinances—we exercise its discipline—we only relinquish its endowments.' Such a claim does not seem to rest upon any intelligible foundation, and will scarcely bear examination. The Church of Scot-

land is the Church which, for the time being, is in connection with the State, and which is provided for by the State. There were Roman Catholics in Scotland before the Roman Catholic religion was established: there were Protestants in Scotland before Protestantism was established. But Roman Catholicism (or Episcopacy, or Presbyterianism, as the case might be) did not become the Church of Scotland until it was united with the State; and whenever that union ceased, it ceased *de facto* to be the Church of the country. Nor could it be alleged, with any show of reason, that the principles for which the Non-intrusionists contended were the principles of the historical Church of Scotland. The rights of the patron had been transmitted from the Roman Catholic to the Presbyterian establishment; and, though occasionally in abeyance during the stormy democratical conflicts of the seventeenth century, they had been jealously protected from the eleventh year of the reign of Anne, down to the day when the Veto Act was passed. This being so, it necessarily followed that the Church had no better right to attack patronage than it had to attack any other civil or patrimonial interest. Even the most extreme members of the 'High party' never maintained that the Church could entirely divest the patron of his right without the consent of the Legislature; but if the Church had no power to abolish patronage, its power to restrict, or to impose conditions inconsistent with, and virtually destructive of the exercise of the right, could not in principle be maintained. And when a private person, or a department of the

Government, or a body of trustees, or a public company, or a Church—whether dissenting or endowed—chooses to invade civil interests and the rights of property, the courts of justice (that is to say *the law*) are entitled to redress the wrong; and when their awards are set at defiance, the peace of society is in peril. Nor did their claim to be considered the Church of Scotland become the members of a communion which held that a Church was constituted whenever an assembly of Christian men joined together. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster traces his pedigree to St. Peter. To him the Church is the historical corporation whose office-bearers have inherited, without a break in the line of ecclesiastical descent, the divine commission and the unimpaired authority of the Apostles. Such a man may not unreasonably declare that, though the State withdraw its subsidy, the only true Church cannot cease to be the Church of the nation. But the arrogant assumptions of the hierarchy come with an ill grace from the lips of Presbyterian divines.

Robertson was quickly drawn into the vortex. From the beginning he had attached himself to the constitutional party. As an ecclesiastical lawyer he knew what the law was, and he could not bear, as he expressed it, to see a man 'stabbed in the dark.' Those who appropriated to themselves the possession of an exclusive godliness consequently regarded Ellon with an evil eye. It was a hornets' nest: and many 'ambassadors' were despatched to preach 'the Gospel' through that benighted district, and to open the eyes of the

people to the spiritual shortcomings of their pastor. The people, however, remained cheerfully incredulous, and the envoys made few converts. When a Non-intrusion agent appeared, he could seldom obtain a room in which to hold meeting. A facetious innkeeper might advise him to ask the minister for the parish church; but a public hall was not to be had for love or money. At length, after one humorous but unmistakable outburst of public feeling, the ecclesiastical demagogues shook the dust from off their feet, and the turbulent populace continued to worship unmolested in 'the auld kirk.'

The controversy was carried on throughout the country; but the Assembly was the arena where the combatants met face to face. Robertson soon became a power in the Assembly. He bore the brunt of the fight. He had embraced the unpopular side (as was to be expected from the quality of his intellect—subtle, logical, dispassionate, and averse to unfair extremes), and he had to encounter famous opponents, and a hostile auditory. The authority of Chalmers, the *finesse* of Candlish, the passionate zeal of Cunningham, were directed against him. But his firmness never failed him. He would rise at the close of a sitting, when his enemies had exhausted argument and invective, and, with dauntless intrepidity and nervous logic, grapple with the giants of debate. A great crisis braced and nerved his faculties. Chalmers described the conflict between Robertson and Cunningham on the night which witnessed the deposition of the Straithbogie ministers—

the turning point of the conflict—as 'the greatest display of intellectual gladiatorship he had ever seen.' Yet throughout that bitter and feverish contest the minister of Ellon never indulged in unkind words, or thoughts, or acts; and—though he relished controversy, though he loved an argument, though his faculties were never keener or more vigorous than during the play of debate—he retreated willingly from the field of strife, to indulge in visions of national union and Christian brotherhood. 'Pray for me,' he writes to his wife during the meeting of that well-remembered Assembly, 'that I may be enabled on all occasions to speak and act in such a manner as may promote most effectually the true objects for which an Assembly is constituted. Pray that my unworthiness and sinfulness may be forgiven, and that my heart and lips, being touched with a live coal from God's holy altar, may be enabled to speak the truth in the love of it.'

The secession of 1843 was a great and memorable event. It seemed at the time that an irreparable disaster had befallen the national Church. It may be doubted, however, whether the anticipation has been realized. Many zealous, energetic, and successful ministers seceded; but it must be remembered, on the other hand, that the secession removed out of the Church that violent democratical element which is in some respects inconsistent with the orderly spirit of an establishment. The seceders have displayed immense vigour and earnestness; but it cannot be said that the liberty of the spirit has been cultivated by the Free

Church. On the contrary, that body has maintained, in relation to most of the religious controversies of the age, an intensely narrow, sectarian, and fanatical attitude. Its assemblies are a relic of the Covenant—a reminiscence of a violent and intolerant epoch. The Established Church, on the other hand, has grown more tolerant; and its younger men—men like Tulloch, Lee, Caird, and Norman Macleod—are at once liberal and devout.

Yet it cannot be denied that those Churchmen who, with Robertson, witnessed the disruption had cause for grave anxiety. In many of the Highland districts the Established Church was dismantled. Shortly after the secession Robertson was at Duirness, in Caithness. 'The Presbytery,' he writes, 'includes only four parishes, the ministers of which have all seceded. The only clergymen within the bounds who adhere to the Establishment are the two parliamentary ministers, and they, of course, have ceased to be members of the Presbytery, which is therefore *in toto* defunct. None of the vacancies have yet been supplied; and meanwhile the whole population, with a very few exceptions, appear to have gone out with their ministers. The ministers are preaching in the open air, in the most sheltered spots that can be found for them. The Duirness preaching station is about half a mile from the inn in which I am now writing, beautifully situated on the green sloping bank of a deep mountain tarn.' But Robertson did not despair. His work hitherto had been a work of defence: it was hereafter to be a work of reconstruction. Nor was he content that the Church should be restored

simply to the position it had previously occupied,—amid its ruins he purposed to raise a fairer and shapelier temple. He resolved that it should extend its borders,—that it should become, even at home, a true missionary society. The great centres of trade, the swarming hives of industry, had outgrown the old local divisions. An extension of the territorial system, a redistribution of the parochial machinery, seemed to him essential to bring the energies of the Church to bear effectively upon these teeming populations; and he resolved to extend the territorial system, and to reorganise and reanimate the parochial machinery. The Church had scarcely recovered from the first shock of the disruption when he announced his great scheme. He would add one hundred and fifty new parishes to the Establishment. The idea, in such circumstances, was a great and an intrepid idea, and it was wrought out with lofty and heroic zeal. 'We entertain the decided conviction,' he says in one of his earliest reports to the Assembly, 'that your success will depend upon the magnanimity with which you prosecute your undertaking; that if with faint-heartedness you limit your exertions, you will probably fail in your limited attempt; that if, on the other hand, with the unfaltering resolution of a magnanimous faith, you apply yourselves to the whole work, the whole, by the Divine blessing, will be successfully accomplished.' The scheme has proved eminently successful. More than half a million sterling was subscribed before its author ceased from his labours. He did not live indeed to witness its ultimate triumph. He

died before the last stone was laid. More than once he had been warned that excessive labour was breaking him down. 'Even were I willing,' he had said the year before his death, 'to sacrifice my health and strength, I cannot afford to continue this state of things. Conscience sometimes whispers loudly that it has already been continued too long.' But there were many obstacles to be removed, and he could not bear to withdraw until they were removed, as he confidently believed that they would be. His faith never wavered. 'Is the often-alleged hopelessness of the task an adequate excuse for indifference? Assuredly not. To despair of the cause of man is to doubt the truthfulness of God.' So he worked on, till death took him from his work. He died in harness. He was penning an appeal for the endowment scheme, when a fatal malady, brought on and aggravated by over-work, attacked him, and the pen dropped from his fingers. That closing appeal was finished by another hand,—when Robertson had been laid in the churchyard of St. Cuthbert's, under the shadow of the Castle Rock.

Robertson was deficient in that buoyancy of temperament which has enabled so many eminent statesmen and lawyers to take work easily. His intellect was too grave and concentrated. He was restless and nervously anxious. In his latter years especially, when the spring was giving way, his labours seemed literally to bow him down. The languid and drooping expression of his face and figure indicated a mind of which the elasticity was gone; yet his temper was naturally sanguine, and

even to the last he preserved a freshness and occasional gaiety of feeling. He was keenly interested in many subjects besides that which he had made his own—mechanical inventions, political economy, the currency, educational and parliamentary reform. He tried costly experiments upon his *glebe*. He was among the earliest agricultural reformers who, appropriating the scientific labours of Liebig, applied dissolved bones to the soil of Great Britain. A few months before his death he asked his colleague, Professor Kelland, to organise a class for the prosecution of the higher branches of mathematics, the study of which he was anxious to resume. In one of his latest letters, written from the banks of Lochleven, he speaks like a schoolboy of 'the elevation of feeling I have more than once enjoyed in finding *a wild duck's nest*.'

Such a career, though not perhaps the career of a man of first-rate powers, deserves to be recorded. For there was undoubtedly something eminently true and heroic in this man—so unselfish, so simple, so zealous, so pure-hearted. And the ungainliness of his presence, the quaintness of his gestures, the involutions and perplexities of his logic, though they might be ridiculed, could only be ridiculed in a spirit of love,—like Miss Brontë's ridicule of Paul Emmanuel, which is very tender, and at times closely akin to tears. Nay, his tortuous mental processes, his intellectual hesitations, and compromises, and retreats, served only to bring into clearer relief the steadfast purity, the untarnished rectitude, the supreme honesty and intrepidity of his moral

nature. His enemies, if he has any, may say perhaps that he sometimes reasoned like a Jesuit; but no stain of meanness nor of baseness rests anywhere upon that pure and blameless life.

SO we read together during these dismal afternoons of early summer (what right has summer to be dismal?), and, ere our readings had closed, we heard that another bright and shining soul—one who was partly a schoolman and partly a knight of romance—had gone over to the majority. JAMES FREDERICK FERRIER was dead.

Ferrier was a philosophical Quixote,—a man who loved 'divine philosophy' for its own sake. The student of pure metaphysics is now rarely met with,—the age of mechanical invention—of the steam-engine and the telegraph—being disposed to regard the proverbially barren fields of psychology with disrelish and disrespect. Against this materialising tendency, Professor Ferrier's life was an uninterrupted and essentially noble protest. No truer, simpler, or more unselfish student ever lived. Seated in his pleasant rustic library, amid its stores of curious and antiquated erudition, he differed as much from the ordinary men one meets in the law courts or on 'Change, as the quaint academic city where he resided differs from Salford or Birmingham. It was here—in his library—that Ferrier spent the best of his days; here that he commented on the Greek psychologists, or explored the intricacies of the Hegelian logic; and for Hegel (be it said in passing) he entertained an intense and, considering the character of his

own mind—its clearness, directness, and love of terseness and epigram—somewhat inexplicable admiration. At the same time he was no mere bookworm. He did not succeed, and did not try to succeed, at the Scottish bar, to which he was called; but he had many of the qualities—subtlety of thought, lucidity of expression, power of arrangement—which ought to have secured success. He took a keen interest in the letters and politics of the day. His own style was brilliant and trenchant, and it was probably the slovenliness and inelegance of Reid (which even the studied art and succinct power of Hamilton have been unable to conceal or repair), which drove him into the camp of the enemy. He was considered, in orthodox philosophical circles, somewhat of a Free Lance. He had a sharp scorn for laborious dulness and consecrated feebleness,—a scorn which (as in his controversy with Dr. Cairns of Berwick) he took no pains to disguise. When he descended into the controversial arena, he was sure to be in the thickest of the mêlée. He hit right and left, quietly, deftly, for the most part, it is true, yet with a force and precision which it was unpleasant to provoke, and difficult to resist. If his life should be written hereafter, let his biographer take for its motto the five words from the *Faery Queen*, which the biographer of the Napiers has so happily chosen,—'*Fierce warres and faithful loves.*' For, though combative over his books and his theories, his nature was singularly pure, affectionate, and tolerant. He loved his friends even better than he hated his foes. His prejudices were invincible; but apart from his

prejudices, his mind was open and receptive,—prepared to welcome truth from whatever quarter it came. Ferrier, other than a high Tory, is an impossible conception to his friends; yet had he been the most pronounced of Radicals, he could not have returned more constantly to first principles, nor showed more speculative fearlessness. He was, in fact, an intrepid and daring reasoner, who allowed few formulas, political, ecclesiastical, or ethical, to cramp his mind, or restrain the free play of his intellectual faculties. This contrast, no doubt, presents an air of paradox; but Ferrier's character, as well as his logic, was sometimes paradoxical. He was a man of infinite subtlety, and he liked to play with his fancies—to place them under strong lights, and in unusual attitudes; but he possessed a fund of humour and common-sense which made him on the whole a sound and discerning student of human nature. He was content to spend his days in contemplative retirement; but every one who has seen him must have remarked a certain eager look—an eagerness of gesture and of speech—which indicated quite other than a sluggish repose. He united with a peculiar sensitiveness of constitution and fineness of critical faculty, a sturdy and indomitable soul. His slight frame was like a girl's; but he was one of the manliest of men. No man was more thoroughly independent; no man resented more warmly, or resisted more courageously, the dictation of cliques and the tyranny of sects. Like all these finely-fibred, sensitive, fastidious men, he was capable of becoming on occasion, as I have indicated, hotly,

and it may be unreasonably, indignant. Perhaps to this original fire and fineness of nature, his early decline is to be attributed. The fiery soul 'fretted the pigmy body to decay.' Taken from us in the prime of life and in the vigour of his powers, the death of such a man is a loss to our philosophical schools not quickly to be repaired; to his relatives, to his disciples, to his students—to all who knew him in the easy intercourse of social life—the loss is irreparable. Apart altogether from those qualities of heart and intellect, of which the world knows, or may yet know, his friends will not soon forget his refined simplicity of manner,—a manner perfectly unaffected, peculiar to himself, and indicating a remarkable delicacy of organisation, yet smacking somehow of the high breeding and chivalrous courtesy of that old-fashioned school of Scottish gentlemen whom he had known in his youth, and of which he remained the representative.

Ferrier's suggests a yet greater name—greater, at least, in certain popular aspects—the name of JOHN WILSON. In him, even more visibly, though perhaps scarcely more truly, the heroic element is to be discerned.

JOHN WILSON had the eagle beak, the lion-like mane, of the Napiers. Mrs. Barret Browning has said of Homer—

> Homer, with the broad suspense
> Of thund'rous brows, and lips intense
> Of garrulous God-innocence—,

and whenever I read the lines, the mighty presence of Christopher North rises before me. John Wilson was

an immense man, physically and mentally, and yet his nature was essentially incomplete. He needed concentration. Had the tree been thoroughly pruned, the fruit would have been larger and richer. As it was, he seldom contrived to sustain the inspiration unimpaired for any time; it ran away into shallows, and spread aimlessly over the sand. In many respects one of the truest, soundest, honestest men who ever lived, he used to grow merely declamatory at times. Amazingly humorous as the Shepherd of the *Noctes* is (there are scenes such as the opening of the haggis, and the swimming match with Tickler, while the London packet comes up the Forth, which manifest the humour of conception as well as the humour of character, in a measure that has seldom been surpassed by the greatest masters), his fun is often awkward, and his enthusiasm is apt to tire. Yet, had Shakspeare written about Falstaff once a month for twenty years, would we not possibly have said the same even of him? And if the Shepherd at his best could be taken out of the *Noctes*, and compressed into a compact duodecimo volume, we should have an original piece of imaginative humour which might fitly stand for all time by the side of the portly Knight. But the world is too crowded and too busy to preserve a creation which is not uniformly at its best, which, on the contrary, is diluted and watered through forty volumes of a magazine; and so it is possible that, not quite unwillingly, posterity will let the Shepherd die. The same in a way holds true of Christopher's own fame. The moralist has told us from of old that only the mortal

part of genius returns to the dust. But then this mortal part was so large a part of Wilson. He was such a magnificent man! No literary man of our time has had such muscles and sinews, such an ample chest, such perfect lungs, such a stalwart frame, such an expansive and Jove-like brow. Had he lived in the classic ages they would have made a god of him,—not because he wrote good verses, or possessed the divine gift of eloquence, but because his presence was god-like. There was a ruddy glow of health about him too,—such as the people of no nation have possessed as a nation, since the culture of the body, as an art of the national life, has been neglected. The critic, therefore, who never saw Wilson cannot rightly estimate the sources of his influence. We, on the contrary, who looked upon him, who heard him speak, know that we can never listen to his like again; can never again look upon one who, while so intellectually noble, so eloquent, so flushed with poetic life, did so nearly approach, in strength and comeliness, the type of bodily perfection. The picture of that old man eloquent in his college class-room—the old man who had breasted the flooded Awe, and cast his fly across the bleakest tarns of Lochabar—pacing restlessly to and fro like a lion in his confined cage, his grand face working with emotion while he turns to the window, through which are obscurely visible the spires and smoky gables of the ancient city, his dilated nostril yet 'full of youth,' his small grey eye alight with visionary fire, as he discourses somewhat discursively, it must be owned, of truth and beauty, and goodness—is one not to be

forgotten. Had he talked the merest twaddle, the effect would have been quite the same; he was a living poem where the austere grandeur of the old drama was united with the humour and tenderness of modern story-tellers; and some such feeling it was that attracted and riveted his hearers.

It has been said by unfriendly critics, that Wilson was an egotist. Montaigne and Charles Lamb were egotists; but we do not complain of an egotism to which not the least charm of their writings is to be attributed. The truth is, that the charge against Wilson rests on a misconception. Christopher North was egotistical; but Christopher North was a creation of the imagination. He represented to the world the invincible Tory champion, before whose crutch the whole breed of Radicals, and Whiglings, and Cockneys fled, as mists before the sun. It was impossible to endow this gouty Apollo with the frailties of mortal combatants. Haughty scorn, immaculate wisdom, unassailable virtue, were the characteristics of the potent tyrant. We have as little right to say that Wilson was an egotist because Christopher North was egotistical (though, no doubt, he could have *looked* the part admirably), as to say that Milton was a fallen angel because he drew the devil. Men (whiggish and priggish) may continue to resent, indeed, as indelicate and unbecoming, the licence of his fancy, and the airy extravagance of his rhetoric; but a juster and more catholic criticism confesses that, in the wide realms of literature, there is room for the grotesque gambols of Puck, for Ariel's moonlight flittings,

for the imaginative riot of Wilson and Heine, and Jean Paul.

THESE are some of the heroes of whom we talked. And then it occurred to us to enquire what these men had in common—in what, in other words, the heroic element consists?

In all of them, undoubtedly, there was a nobility of life, a greatness of soul, of which we see little in the common world: but is there not, above and beyond these, some more special and vital element of union, binding together men, whose careers and characters (when regarded from the outside) are so widely separated? I think that there is such an element; and that this element is the imagination.

All these men were idealists. Even Cavour was a dreamer. 'So much the worse for him,' the materialist and the prig reply. To me it seems, on the contrary, that Cavour's dreaming was his salvation. Had Cavour been an unimaginative man, the chances are that he would have become a mere trickster. There is no saying to what depths of diplomatic baseness he might have sunk. But the ideal element in him, not only made him great, but kept him pure. The thoughts of a man whose monomania (if you like the word) was a free Italy, could never become very mean. Into this pure temple of his soul no foul or noxious creature could enter. But if he had had no such imaginative conception of the nature of his work, Cavour's was precisely the kind of character that, amid diplomatic

trickery and verbal *finesse*, would rapidly have deteriorated. So that to a certain extent the presence of the imagination keeps a man pure; and then I think the other half of the proposition, that no man who is not imaginative can be really first-rate in any department of work, may be accepted without much further controversy. The imagination made Napier a great general and Cavour a great statesman, as it made Buonarotti a great artist and Milton a great poet. The imagination is 'the bright consummate flower' of the mind; and when the imagination is absent, the intellect, never working with supreme felicity, never attains to supreme excellence. Religion itself is an exercise of the imagination; and a prosaic religion is a contradiction in terms,—implying as it does, a false or radically inadequate conception of the Divine nature. In this sense it may be said quite truly that many 'religious' people know less of the Christian religion than the unbelievers whom they denounce; and that the *Record* newspaper (to take an extreme case) has no religion whatever.

IX.

OUR CAMP IN THE WOODLAND.

'COME,' said Letty, 'leave that musty *Quarterly*, and let us pitch our tent in the woodland.' And —nothing loth—I went with her to the woods.

There was an old story-book which I read in my youth, and of which I retain a vivid recollection, wherein it was narrated how two friends (a schoolboy, I think, and a rather didactic moralist), walked out together into the fields, and among the lanes, and how they saw many wonderful things. They saw the water-rats in the mill-dam, and the trout lying under the big stones in the stream waiting for May-flies, and the lapwing which, with its pretty affected broken-hearted ways, wiled them from its nest. And a delightful sunshiny feeling lay about the book—the sunshine in which childhood basks. On some such vague quest Letty and I went forth,—knowing as little where our pursuit would lead us as Sir Galahad when he left home to search for the Sangreal.

Dobbins, the donkey, was caught and caparisoned. Dobbins has the profound donkey look (which makes a donkey's face one of the most inscrutable of faces), but

he does not suffer from the obstinacy of his race. He is an imaginative donkey, and loves contemplation; but he is idly inclined, rather than cross-grained or *thrawn*, as we say here. A donkey addicted to sentiment does not like to have his meditations interrupted; but Dobbins never kicks except in a reverie, and from pure absence of mind. So Dobbins suited us exactly. In his panniers he carried Letty's drawing-paper and pencils, a parcel of books, a parcel of sandwiches—food for the body and the mind—out of which the delicate neck of a Rhine-like flask emerged; and on occasion, by an ingenious adjustment of the panniers, he could carry Letty herself; for Letty is, after all, a slight morsel; and with care, and apart from her crinoline, might be packed into the pannier with the sandwiches.

Thus, in the midsummer morning, we started for the woods,—up-country all the way. We rested for a moment now and again, to look down on the blue distant sea. On both sides of the road the haymakers were at work. And as we went along—Letty by this time mounted on Dobbins—we agreed that we should write an Essay on Wild Violets; and the argument of the Essay was to run somewhat as follows:—

There ought to be a little of the wild violet flavour in everything and everybody—men, women, and especially children. It is impossible to care for people in whom there is no trace of the wild violet; mere good people, trained up to a stiff respectability, and pruned into rigid decorum. Such a poor bewildered outcast little waif as Phœne, in Mr. Browning's *Pippa Passes*,

is eternally (one should say 'everlastingly,' perhaps, out of compliment to the Athanasian Creed and the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose hopes of heaven, were that word lost, would suffer shipwreck, he says)—eternally loveable; but mere bad people are quite as commonplace as mere good people. Then there is the wild violet time of life,—the timid fragrance of first love. But this (the charming cynic, who has tried a good deal of it, concludes) quickly passes away. Never again will Cymbeline 'recapture the first fine careless rapture,' which breathes through our earlier poets, though she dance in a hundred ball-rooms, and trifle with a thousand hearts. And you, Sir Lancelot, have already exchanged the mystical adoration which filled your heart for the dead queen of your soul; you have exchanged this dream of love for a prosaic and circumspect 'attachment.' We find wild violets, pressed between their pages, in a few books,—lamentably few, and mostly with the freshness pressed out; and in the popular superstitions of the romance nations,—as you may see by comparing Scotch with English supernaturalism. Then there are the wild violet moods of nature. And what may they be? you ask. Even nature, it seems, cannot resist the reign of decorum. She is afraid to show herself in her true colours; she is lionised, and methodised, and conventionalised, and Turnerised, and Ruskinised, till you cannot tell what her true colours are. To know what they are you must surprise her suddenly and unawares,—in her bath, as it were. You have noticed that time of the dawn when, though the

harbour-light still burns, it seems out of place and sorts, —like a strayed reveller, or a beauty in her ball-dress, going home by morning. They answered well enough at night; but the mild splendours of the dawn shame them. It is at this morning hour that the clouds and the trees and the sea look fresh and novel. The dew of night and sleep rests upon them. There is a conscious, it seems to us almost a startled, pause, when they first become aware that they are being looked at. They have stayed outside in the open air, under the stars, and they have learned something of which we, cooped up between narrow walls, are ignorant: some strange revelation has been made to them by the night; and when we rise unexpectedly and confront them, they are scared and troubled, and do not bear to be questioned. This is one of nature's wild violet moods, never known to the sluggard. Poetry, too, without the wild violet element, is 'naught;' yet, except in a *Proud Maisie*, at times, where is the poet who now preserves this chaste natural fragrance?

And then, as we entered the wood, Letty repeated Sir Walter's perfect lines:—

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early:
Sweet Robin sits on the bush
Singing so rarely.

'Tell me, thou bonnie bird,
When shall I marry me?'—
'When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye!'

'Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?'—
'The grey-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

'The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady:
The owl from the steeple sing,
Welcome, proud lady.'

Is it not wonderful how Sir Walter contrived to write this song,—which, if you do not love at the first reading, you must continue to read till you do? But the truth is, I fancy, that there is no 'contrivance' in it. Somehow it came out of that strong, simple, natural country gentleman's heart, as directly and inevitably as the violet comes out of the soil. I do not believe that he knew how good it was. He felt, no doubt, that he had rapidly and vividly incarnated the mood of feeling which he meant to express; but he did not know that this clear, colourless piece of crystal was a diamond of the purest water, in which the most curious eye cannot detect a flaw,—worthy of the crown of a king, or of the heart of a people. Had he attempted to set it or mend it (according even to such simple inartificial rules of art as he knew and obeyed), he would have marred it. But he dropped it carelessly by the wayside; and thus it retains, and will retain for ever, the inimitable symmetry and limpid perfection of nature.

Yet it is difficult sometimes to make sure that what moves us in a poem is there originally, and that it has not, on the contrary, been put into it by ourselves,—as

Calvinists, for instance, put their doctrines into the New Testament,—a most unlikely place, surely. Youth, it has been said, is the season of imaginative misery. Youth, no doubt, wears its grief on its arm; but age, which is reproached for its coldness, is the season when grief is truly felt. Thus we cannot impartially criticise sad songs late in life. Events have given them tyrannical significance and a mournful power. They are set to a solemn music. The boy should be the critic of the dirge and the requiem: he has no pathetic memories to drape them in, nor can he attach to them the borrowed charms of association. To him *Proud Maisie* is only a vague lament: he does not see the cruelly fair face which haunts you while you read. There is a bitter sweetness in your cup—sweet with memory, bitter with regret—which childhood has not tasted.

And now we have reached that glade in the wood-side where we mean to pitch our camp. Letty takes out her drawing materials, and selects the spot she is to sketch; to me she hands one or two diminutive volumes, which she had packed in the panniers, and with which she requires me to occupy myself while she is recording the traits of wild flower and fern that clothe the bank beside us.

Ours is not the land,

> Where the sun with a golden mouth can blow
> Blue bubbles of grapes down a vineyard row;

but there is a rare charm about this mossy break in the

Scottish woodland. Many years ago they had begun to thin the larch at this particular spot; but the work had been interrupted, and the pines yet lie where they fell. In the interval, however, the mosses and the lichen had taken possession of the dead trunks, and they are again masses of verdure. You wade knee-deep through delicate ferns; there are open beds on which the wild hyacinth and the wood anemone bloom. The foxglove nods on the roughest faces of the rocks. It is only the midsummer-time, yet the sun has already begun to brown the foliage. The bracken is parched. Pines, ferns, broom—all the leaves, except the green leaves of the blae-berry—are assuming the russet suit that autumn wears. That is the reason, perhaps, why the cushat, dreaming among the tree-tops, sobs to itself in the sad silence of the wood.

It was here that I read and mused upon what one of our greatest poets—Robert Browning—had said about life and death and the life beyond.

Let me try—with your leave, O most forbearing of readers!—to recall a little of this desultory woodland criticism. I have told you in the last chapter something about the men who, in the fields of arms, and philosophy, and letters, have won our regard; the series would be incomplete were the poets' niche to remain unoccupied.

ROBERT BROWNING.

IT is about time that we began to do justice to Robert Browning. A nation should be able to make up its mind on the merits and demerits of its leaders in the course of thirty years. Thirty years have passed since Robert Browning's first volume of poems was published; and thirty years ago he was almost as widely known as he is to-day. He is like to share the fate of Milton, and of several other Englishmen,—and women too.

> 'Tis only when they spring to heaven that angels
> Reveal themselves to you: they sit all day
> Beside you, and lie down at night by you
> Who care not for their presence—muse or sleep—
> And all at once they leave you, and you know them;
> We are so fooled, so cheated!

Browning's is, in truth, a curious fame. Few (except the unfrequent traveller, who remembers somewhat sadly now the kindly greetings which met him within that pleasant English household 'at Florence, on the hill of Bellosguardo') know him personally:* his works

* It is proper to mention that this paper was written several years since.

are read by an insignificant minority, only a moiety of whom profess to understand a tithe of what they read; only here and there, in nooks and byways, do you meet vigorous and somewhat disagreeable people, addicted to sarcasm and other evil courses, who take him as a kind of tonic, and who fancy that an age which has Robert Browning and the Bible cannot be very badly off after all.

I confess that this profound neglect and unpopularity has always rather surprised me. One who understands the people of England is of course prepared for many anomalous and inexplicable phenomena. Trial by jury is the palladium of our liberties; yet an English or Scotch jury (not to speak of an Irish) is the very last tribunal to which a wise man would be inclined to submit his cause. 'May God send thee a good deliverance' is not by any means the language of hope, when addressed to a friend who has to undergo this ordeal. The verdicts of the English public are often in like manner very incomprehensible; yet it is difficult to account at first sight for Browning's prolonged unpopularity. For he has many of the qualities which recommend a poet to the people. He is a master of the passions. His humour is bright and keen. He has a fine eye for colour. There is a rich and daring melody in his verse. He observes with minute and absolute fidelity. He is a philosophical poet; but the direct human element is always strong in his philosophy. Tennyson (our popular poet) is essentially an intellectual poet; but Browning is at once a more masculine,

and a more intricate and subtle, thinker than the laureate.

Yet his unpopularity may be explained. He is not the poet to be perused with profit in the nursery or in a railway-carriage. He does not relish a platitude as Mr. Longfellow does, nor does his verse move with the same supple smoothness and graceful facility. He is not a rhetorician, like Lord Macaulay. Unlike Pope's, his couplet does not carry a sting in its tail. He does not care to be 'effective.' 'Point' is not his strong point. His meaning, besides, does not always lie on the surface. It has to be sought with diligence and close attention. Thus, to those who read while they run, he is commonly obscure, and often incomprehensible. He is never insipid, but — brusque, quaint, rugged, intricately ingenious, involved, ironical — he perplexes the dull and startles the timid.

> Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness
> Environ my devotedness, as quaintly
> As round about some antique altar wreathe
> The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.

Yet these defects have been exaggerated, and are not wilful. The occasional obscurity of his language, and the irregularity of the poetic forms which he uses, cannot be attributed to affectation. They are the natural and appropriate garniture of a peculiar and complex genius. As such, it will be well to look a little more closely into their origin, ere we go farther.

A vein of obscurity necessarily runs through the

subjects which occupy, or at least attract, Mr. Browning's muse. There are certain aspects of life which are by no means easily read. You may address an ode to your mistress's eyebrow, or celebrate the virtues of your lady's sparrow, if not with the grace of Catullus, at all events in language that is perfectly intelligible. Within this limited circle you are safe enough. The slope of the bank is very gradual at first; but, once you are out a few yards, it shelves down suddenly into deep water. There are mysteries enough even upon the earth's surface, and only a light crust lies between us and the infinite,—infinite light or infinite darkness. No thoughtful poet can altogether avoid these topics, nor avert his eyes from the grave issues of life,—death, immortality, hell, heaven. The cry for light will not be silenced, though we crown ourselves with roses, and pour the hundred-yeared Opimian before the shrine of Apollo. And whenever the poet essays to decipher those high instincts, 'which, be they what they may, are yet the fountain-light of all our day,' perfect lucidity of style is hardly to be looked for. Mr. Browning has not been able to escape the perilous fascination which, as he has pointed out, peculiarly affects the Christian poet. Pagan art is perfect in its way; *we* falter and hesitate, are perplexed and inconsistent. Why? Because our horizon is wider.

> To-day's brief passion limits their range:
> It seethes with the morrow for us, and more.

Only in one work, however—his *Christmas Eve*—has

Mr. Browning essayed persistently to pierce into the dark. He is commonly content to adopt the 'strategic movement' of American generals,—sometimes discharging a scrap of irony or a light jest as he flies.

> There remaineth a rest for the people of God,
> And I have had troubles enough, for one ;—

or—

> 'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls,
> And matter enough to save one's own ;—

or—

> As for Venice and its people, merely born to bloom and drop,
> Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop.
> What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?—

are the parting shafts that cover his retreat. There is never, however, any foolish levity in Browning's laughter. His irony plays over his melancholy humour —that intricate, exquisite sadness, that heroic pensiveness—as the rainbow plays upon its cloud. Though baffled, he never ceases to recognise the reality and magnitude of the problem.

> Only I discern
> Infinite passion and the pain
> Of finite hearts that yearn.

Mr. Browning, moreover, does not care to study what I may call the stock passions. He seldom pursues an obvious train of thought or feeling. He delights in

tracking the byways of the imagination. With grim fun, with tender irony, with unfrequent tears, he lays bare the waste and solitary places of the heart. The public does not like this. Vice should be vice; virtue, virtue; moral distinctions are confounded if Lucifer does not wear a complete suit of black, or if there be any speck on Gabriel's wings. It is undoubtedly quite true that the writer who does not conform to this rule often fails to make his outline sharp and articulate. The acute angles which the mind grasps without exertion are wanting. Most of those who have read *King Charles and King Victor* complain that they have been unable to form any exact conception of the politic and passionate D'Ormea. Is he an angel of light or a minister of darkness? The man himself, and those who knew him best, would have been puzzled to answer the question; and we cannot require his biographer to be better informed. The shadowy border-land that lies between the good and the evil passions, where they meet as on a kind of neutral ground, is more thickly peopled than we are willing to admit; and the dramatist who paints its occupants with entire fidelity cannot undertake to produce a rogue who is all roguery, or an honest man whose honesty is free from every base alloy.

Nor (as might be anticipated from what has just been said) are the verdicts which Mr. Browning pronounces calculated to win popular favour. There is a species of rhetorical morality which has been current for a long time, especially on the stage and in juvenile

literature. Wicked Don Giovanni is removed by the fiends. The good prince and princess are united, and live happily ever afterwards. The vindictive uncle relents, and leaves the virtuous 'prentice his blessing and his estate. Most thoughtful men, however, are unwilling to commit themselves to any exact theory of retribution. The characters on the wall are hard to interpret, and are better, perhaps, left unread. But Mr. Browning insists on reading them. Nor will he accept the meaning that lies quite on the surface. He deliberately prefers the difficult reading. He does not merely repudiate the verdict of the vulgar, but he undertakes to show where it is defective. King Victor returns to claim the crown which he had renounced. The irresolute Charles is profoundly agitated. He owes obedience to his father,—*that* is the duty which lies nearest to him, and which will win the applause of those who relish an effective moral interlude. It is at this moment that Polyxena, his high-souled wife, appeals to him. The speech is so fine, and so aptly illustrates Mr. Browning's habitual mood, that I am unwilling to curtail it:

> King Charles! Pause here upon this strip of time
> Allotted you out of eternity!
> Crowns are from God—in his name you hold yours.
> Your life 's no least thing, were it fit your life
> Should be abjured along with rule; but now
> Keep both! Your duty is to live and rule.
> You, who would vulgarly look fine enough
> In the world's eye, deserting your soul's charge,—
> Ay, you would have men's praise—this Rivoli

Would be illumined; while, as 'tis, no doubt,
Something of stain will ever rest on you;
No one will rightly know why you refused
To abdicate; they 'll talk of deeds you could
Have done, no doubt,—nor do I much expect
Future achievements will blot out the past,
Envelope it in haze—nor shall we two
Be happy any more; 'twill be, I feel,
Only in moments that the duty 's seen
As palpably as now—the months, the years
Of painful indistinctness are to come,
While daily must we tread these palace rooms
Pregnant with memories of the past; your eye
May turn to mine and find no comfort there,
Through fancies that beset me, as yourself,
Of other courses with far other issues,
We might have taken this great night—such bear,
As I will bear! What matters happiness?
Duty! There 's man's one moment—this is yours!

In *The Glove* this analytic propensity is seen in full play. The poem is founded upon the well-known incident of De Lorge and the lion, and Peter Ronsard is the narrator.

'Heigho,' yawned one day King Francis,
'Distance all value enhances.
Here we've got peace; and aghast I'm
Caught thinking war the true pastime!
Is there a reason in metre?
Give us your speech, Master Peter?'
I who, if mortal dare say so,
Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,
'Sire,' I replied, 'joys prove cloudlets;
Men are the merest Ixions—'
Here the King whistled aloud, 'Let's—
Heigho—go look at our lions!'

Such are the sorrowful chances
If you talk fine to King Francis.

So they visit Blue-beard, the great lion (a splendid fellow), and as soon as King Francis declares that no man is foolhardy enough to leap into the den, a lady's glove flutters over the rails.

The sentence no sooner was uttered
Than over the rails a glove fluttered,
Fell close to the lion, and rested;
The dame 'twas (who flung it and jested
With life so) De Lorge had been wooing
For months past; he sat there pursuing
His suit, weighing out with nonchalance
Fine speeches like gold from a balance.

Sound the trumpet, no true knight's a tarrier!
De Lorge made one leap at the barrier,
Walked straight to the glove,—while the lion
Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on
The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire
And the musky oiled skin of the Kaffir,—
Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,
Leaped back where the lady was seated,
And full in the face of its owner
Flung the glove—

King and courtiers applaud the conduct of the lover—

'Twas mere vanity,
Not love, set that task to humanity!'
Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing
From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing.

But the poet is not so quickly satisfied, and when the lady leaves the court 'amid hooting and laughter,' he

follows her. Why did she set such a task? What does her conduct mean? This is her explanation. Her lover had told her, over and over, that he would brave death for her sake.

> When I looked on your lion it brought
> All the dangers at once to my thought,
> Encountered by all sorts of men
> Before he was lodged in his den,—
> From the poor slave whose club or bare hands
> Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands,
> With no king and no court to applaud,
> By no shame, should he shrink, overawed,
> Yet to capture the creature made shift
> That his rude boys might laugh at the gift:
> To the page who last leaped o'er the fence
> Of the pit, on no greater pretence
> Than to get back the bonnet he dropped,
> Lest his pay for a week should be stopped.
> So wiser I judged it to make
> One trial what 'death for my sake'
> Really meant, while the power was yet mine,
> Than to wait until time should define
> Such a phrase not so simply as I,
> Who took it to mean just 'to die.'
> The blow a glove gives is but weak—
> Does the mark yet discolour my cheek?
> But when the heart suffers a blow,
> Will the pain pass as soon, do you know?

'Mere vanity' is the popular verdict. 'By no means,' the poet replies. 'Your rude verdicts are as mischievous as your coarse penalties. You know the points of a horse or a sword well enough; but the human mind, with its delicate works and complicated springs,

is quite beyond your beat.' A poet who habitually treats the vulgar with indifference or contempt, cannot expect, and probably does not desire, to be understood by them.

It may be admitted, however, that Mr. Browning's muse is occasionally obscure from other causes. He lacks patience. He is too abrupt. He passes from one conclusion to another, without clasping the intermediate links of the chain. This is scarcely fair to the ordinary reader who cannot be expected to follow an argument that is at once abstruse and elliptical. The question, of course, is one of degree, and depends mainly upon the audience that the writer desires. You do not speak to a child as you speak to a man. Illustrations that are essential to the beginner become 'vain repetitions' to the practised thinker. On the other hand, as unveiled beauty is less seductive than the hint of the hidden charm, allusion is sometimes more pregnant and suggestive than detail. And at all events a strictly logical method is out of place in a poem, even in a philosophical poem.

I am disposed to think that what is called 'irregularity' in Mr. Browning's genius, is not a cardinal defect. His 'ruggedness,' at any rate, is most distasteful to those who know him least. It is easy to be musical on conditions. In a poem like *Tannhaüser*,—manifesting manipulative dexterity, and coloured by a hectic flush of poetic sentiment, but revealing neither the creative force nor the purified light of the imagination,—everything is sacrificed to melodious expression. The immediate

object is attained, but the melody is meretricious, and soon loses its charm. Any poetry, indeed, which relies exclusively upon effective and musical *wording*, does not spring from, and cannot retain a permanent hold on, the heart. It is a mere husk. There is no kernel of thought or feeling. Mr. Browning's ruggedness arises mainly from his determination to say precisely what he wants to say. He allows no consideration to deter him from expressing his thought with perfect exactness. Grace, purity of language, symmetry of form, are admirable, whenever they are consistent with absolute truthfulness; but they become tawdry ornaments, sentimental toys, the indications of an effeminate and slothful nature, when attained at its expense. I do not mean that Mr. Browning is specially 'conscientious' (to use the word in vogue), because he renders with fidelity the intricate subtleties of the imagination; he does so spontaneously, and because he entertains a genuine artistic distaste for the gaudy and pretentious work, which does not stand the test of time, of prolonged examination, and intimate acquaintance.

So that Mr. Browning's poems are irregular only in the sense that Shakspeare's plays are irregular. The irregularity in both cases is a sign of intellectual affluence. The writers rejoice in their writing, as the builders of mediæval cathedrals, or the illuminators of old missals, rejoiced in the grotesque demons and flowery margins which enrich their work. Browning takes the sincerest delight in quaint ingenious com-

binations; no poet ever lighted upon more whimsical rhymes, or managed more intricate metres. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, and the hand designs. The grotesque rhymes of Browning, like the poetic conceits of Shakspeare, are merely the holiday frolic of a rich and vivacious imagination. Healthy masculine vigour is apt to run riot at times. It is very significant also that Browning, who has tried his hand at almost every form of verse, has never written a sonnet. Sonnet-writing is a pretty, but rather solemn, dexterity,—a sleight-of-hand business,—the knack of presenting an emotion in a given number of lines. It demands, consequently, unity, if not severity, of conception; simplicity, if not rigidity, of expression. The sonnet bears the same relation to the lyric or the pastoral, that the statue bears to the painter's flowing lines and easy movement. The passionate and affluent genius of Browning rejects this yoke. A state dress prevents the play of his muscles. He needs space and breathing-room. He cannot work with comfort unless he enjoys perfect freedom. 'The weight of too much liberty,' which oppresses timid and feeble minds, does not embarrass him. He is a law to himself, and does not require to be restrained. It must be kept in mind, moreover, that Shakspeare and Shakspeare's followers war against the letter, but not against the spirit, of the law of form. They entertain no preference for a savage and barbarian uncouthness. Browning, in particular, has a fine feeling for proportion, and a true dramatic conception of the relation of each part to the whole.

But it is precisely because he possesses this sense that he cannot allow an effeminate fastidiousness about the cadence of a sentence or the jingle of a rhyme to interfere with the life that he seeks to create or to restore. *Life* must be attained at any cost. The flower *must* reach the light. It may be sadly knotted and stained before it attains maturity; but it has acted in obedience to the highest law of its being, and having done so, remains through a thousand varieties, true to its essential type.

Having reviewed the charges which have been most frequently pressed against Mr. Browning, it will be well, before proceeding to determine the place which he occupies in the poetic world, to glance in passing at some of the specialities of his genius, which I shall illustrate (as the most efficacious argument) rather by example than by comment.

Mr. Browning, I have said, is an accurate observer. And his power of observation is at once wide and microscopical. He has studied men and art and books as well as nature. Windermere was always in Wordsworth's best verse. He was never quite at ease in the city; seldom essentially or vitally true except in the presence of nature. He became dry, restrained, and rhetorical, when diverted from his favourite pursuits. But Browning is as much at home with pictures and histories as with ferns and mountain mists. An originally prolific soil has been elaborately cultivated. Mr. Ruskin has observed that *The Bishop's Tomb at*

St. Praxed's displays an unique and marvellous insight into the spirit of the *Renaissance.*

> The lump of lapis lazuli,
> Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
> Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast,—

or—

> The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me;
> Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
> Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
> The Saviour at his Sermon on the Mount,
> St. Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
> Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
> And Moses with the tables,—

or—

> One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut—
> There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
> And have I not St. Praxed's ear to pray
> Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
> And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?—

are only the finishing touches of a sketch that is worked up with consummate consistency. The great picture which Fra Lippo Lippi designs to paint for his convent, —the jovial painter himself in one corner, led in by 'a sweet angelic slip of a thing;' the illustrated walls of the Venetian palace; the bust of Protus,—

> Among these latter busts we count by scores,
> Half emperors and quarter emperors,
> Each with his bay-leaf fillet, loose-thonged vest,
> Loric and low-browed Gorgon on the breast;
> One loves a baby face, with violets, there,
> Violets instead of laurel in the hair,
> As those were all the little locks could bear,—

these, and innumerable others, are the work of a man who is intimately acquainted with the different schools of European art, and who has entered into their life. Yet too much has been sometimes made of the foreign element in Mr. Browning's poetry. He never forgets the fatherland. He is English to the back-bone. When he exclaims, '*my* England at home,' the words ring with unmistakable music. The figures he deals with are foreign, but the rich vein of humour, and manliness, and tender irony which runs through his work is characteristically English. Who, except, an English poet, could have written the lines on Trafalgar, —that noble hymn, which burns with sunset?

> Nobly, nobly, Cape Saint Vincent to the north-west died away:
> Sun-set ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz bay;
> Bluish mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay:
> In the dimmest north-east distance dawned Gibraltar grand and grey.
> 'Here and here did England help me—how can I help England?' say
> Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
> While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

A man who understands art so well, ought to be a good colorist. Few poets, in truth, have been better. Mr. Browning's pictures are full of colour,—rich, yet accurately toned, and in perfect keeping. Such lines as,—

> Hear the last news of her
> From some old thief and son of Lucifer,
> His forehead chapletted green with leafy hop,
> Sunburned all over like an Æthiop,—

or those on the Tyrian Dye,—

> Most like the centre spike of gold
> Which burns deep in the blue-bell's womb,
> What time, with ardours manifold,
> The bee goes singing to her groom
> Drunken and over bold,—

might have been written by Paul Veronese or Tintoret, and produce the same effect on the mind that a picture by either of these artists, or a bunch of grapes, or a Spanish fruit-girl's basket of melons or peaches, does.

Mr. Browning is constitutionally sarcastic. Yet he is not so, to the exclusion of qualities that are not often found in union with a sarcastic temper. He is tranquil; but his tranquillity is the repose of conscious strength. He is ironical; but he is passionate. His demeanour is composed; yet fire burns below. No man is more capable of understanding the subtle abandonment and the sublime extravagance of love. He can appreciate the full force of Shakspeare's great line—'When maidens sue, men give like gods.' The girl is ready to yield up her very soul to her lover,—

> 'Tis said the Arab sage
> In practising with gems can loose
> Their subtle spirit in his cruce
> And leave but ashes; so, sweet Mage,
> Leave them my ashes when thy use
> Sucks out my soul, thy heritage!

She will plait no vulgar jewel in the hair that he has praised,—

Now pluck a great blade of that riband-grass
To plait in where the foolish jewel was
I flung away: since you have praised my hair,
'Tis proper to be choice in what I wear.

And when he is dying, basely stabbed, upon her breast,—

It was ordained to be so, Sweet, and best
Comes now, beneath thine eyes, and on thy breast.
Still kiss me! Care not for the cowards! Care
Only to put aside thy beauteous hair
My blood will hurt!

She has refused his suit; but she gives him leave to ride by her side this one afternoon.

I and my mistress, side by side,
Shall be together, breathe and ride:
So one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

And the true wife waits for her husband—be he faithful or faithless—on the farther shore,—

It all comes to the same thing in the end,
Since mine thou wast, mine art, and mine shall be,
Faithful or faithless, sealing up the sum
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must come
Back to the heart's place here I keep for thee!

Such sentences burn with passionate feeling. The eye lights, the pulse throbs, language moves on eloquently and vehemently, like a noble river. But the passion is always pure. It is never smutched by sensuality. It is like the fire upon a Christian altar, or—under a different guise, and fixed upon an earthly object—the fervour of the martyr, who can die—

How gladly!—if I made acquist
Through the brief minute's fierce annoy
Of God's eternity of joy.

Alive to these rich, exquisite, and diversified influences, the poet must relish life keenly. Most poets do so; but Mr. Browning's intense enjoyment is peculiar, and very characteristic of the man:—

Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock—
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree—the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water,—the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses, for ever in joy!

If life, 'mere living,' be indeed such a lovely thing, where is the good of experimenting upon it? How much better is it than art, or philosophy, or poetry? What reward has the poet who describes it, or the painter who copies it? 'If I carve the young Phœbus,' Cleon exclaims, 'am I therefore young! No!—art has aged me before my time.' 'To know' is something, no doubt, and to prove how the beauty of the world may be enjoyed is more,—

But knowing nought, to enjoy is something too.
Yon rower with the moulded muscles there,
Lowering the sail, is nearer it than I.
I can write love-odes—thy fair slave's an ode.
I get to sing of love, when grown too grey
For being loved: she turns to that young man,
The muscles all a-ripple on his back.
I know the joy of kingship; well—thou art king!

How poor, indeed, are the highest achievements of art, when compared with the life which it strives to perpetuate!

> And you, great sculptor—so you gave
> A score of years to art, her slave,
> And that's your Venus—whence we turn
> To yonder girl that fords the burn!

Men grow famous, no doubt—poets, philosophers, soldiers, statesmen, are spoken about after they have died. But what is fame? A single throb of the pulse is worth the history of a world which has perished.

> We ride and I see her bosom heave.
> There's many a crown for who can reach.
> Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
> The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
> A soldier's doing!—what atones?
> They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
> My riding is better, by their leave.

Possessed of this eager and direct enjoyment of existence, we need not wonder that Mr. Browning's power of *presentment* should be exceedingly vivid. The faculty of clear and picturesque presentment is a most valuable gift. The sunlight comes into the picture. The breeze wanders among the apple-blossoms, and shakes the rushes. The curls are dusted with gold. The cheek flushes. There is *life* there. And the gift is not a common one. The pictures of all men who do not possess it, of all mere critics, philosophers, and divines, want firmament as much as a bit of præraphaelite orchard-wall does; have less air in them than

a jar of preserved salmon, hermetically sealed, has; are as flat as a flounder's back, and as stiff as a saint by an Old Master. Mere words, or mere accumulations of words, however appropriate, however cleverly selected, never produce the effect. The poet's spirit—pure, delicate, subtle, like the vanishing perfume of some rare drug, like the retreating echo of the hunter's music among the hills—must move among them, 'soothing with finer fancies, touching with lighter thought.' There is often more real air, earth, and water in one page by Mr. Browning,—as in this picture of the girl, leaning over the balcony of the Giudecca palace to catch her truant loory,—than in a whole volume of rhetorical word-painting.

Ah, the autumn day
I, passing, saw you overhead!
First out a cloud of curtain blew,
Then a sweet cry, and last, came you—
To catch your loory, that must needs
Escape just then, of all times then,
To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds,
And make me happiest of men.
I scarce could breathe to see you reach
So far back o'er the balcony
(To catch him ere he climbed too high
Above you in the Smyrna peach),
That quick the round smooth cord of gold,
This coiled hair on your head, unrolled,
Fell down you like a gorgeous snake,
The Roman girls were wont, of old,
When Rome there was, for coolness' sake,
To let lie curling o'er their bosoms.

> Dear loory! may his beak retain
> Ever its delicate rose stain,
> As if the wounded lotus-blossoms
> Had marked their thief, to know again!

Such passages manifest a very rare power of presentment: but Mr. Browning's illustrative faculty is quite as remarkable. Metaphor is the language of the imagination. 'All things are double, one against another;' and the poet is the interpreter of this mystical union. He discovers the body which the thought naturally assumes when translated into shape and invested with local habitation, and he joins them together. Any bungler may practise the rite, as in Scotland you can be married by the blacksmith; but it requires the nicest poetic feeling, tact, and sense, to reflect a perfect image. The chief end of imagery is to illustrate. It is the argument of the poem. Emotion is subtle, evanescent, apt to escape. It shuns the captivity of speech. Fitful moods, transient feelings, the vague longings and impulses of the heart (and these the poet undertakes to express) require to be *mirrored* before we can apprehend them with exactness. There are other uses which the metaphor answers; but the illustrative, though not its highest, is its most serviceable function. Mr. Browning's figures are always original and apposite, and heighten the impression of intellectual richness which his work never fails to convey. It will be well to string a few of these pearls together—though, like all finished work of this kind, they suffer sadly when divorced from the material into which they have been wrought, and

with which they were designed to blend. The nymph listens to the wind murmuring on her lute, as the limpet listens for the sea,—

> And while such murmurs flow, the nymph
> Bends o'er the harp-top from the shell,
> As the dry limpet for the lymph
> Come with a tune he knows so well.

Festus had imagined that the ostentatious air of defeat which Paracelsus had assumed was only the pause before the spring,—

> That careless bearing, free from all pretence,
> Even of contempt for what it ceased to seek,
> Smiling humility, praising much, yet waiving
> What it professed to praise;—
> That ostentatious show of past defeat,
> That ready acquiescence in contempt—
> I deem'd no other than the letting-go
> His shivered sword, of one about to spring
> Upon his foe's throat.

Paracelsus vindicates his ambition in a passage of wonderful beauty. From childhood a fire has burned within him—the inspiration of an angel, he believes, rather than the working of his own soul.

> I knew not then
> What whispered in the evening, and spoke out
> At midnight. If some mortal, born too soon,
> Were laid away in some great trance—the ages
> Coming and going all the while—till dawned
> His true time's advent, and could then record
> The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed,—
> Then I might tell more of the breath so light

> Upon my eyelids, and the fingers warm
> Among my hair. Youth is confused; yet never
> So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,
> I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns
> A watersnake when fairies cross his sleep.

These are figures which simply illustrate; but there is another class which probably infer for their production keener and more direct excitement. At certain times the forms of external nature are appropriated by intense or exalted feeling, and transformed into instruments of vengeance or blessing. The lightning ceases to be a simple natural phenomenon, and becomes to the guilty lovers the avenging arm of the Lord.

> Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
> Swift ran the searching tempest overhead,
> And ever and anon some bright white shaft
> Burnt through the pine-tree roof—here burnt and there,
> As if God's messenger through the close wood screen
> Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
> Feeling for guilty thee and me; then broke
> The thunder like a whole sea overhead.

Rarer, purer, and loftier than any of the others is that exercise of the faculty which dispenses with the material form altogether. The poetic conception comes in its room, and pushes it aside. We have had many admirable pictures of the dawn. That pale pure light, growing momentarily upon the horizon, and then rousing the veiled and purple sea, ushers in a moment of complete and exquisite repose, more complete and profound than the repose of the night. For all night long, watched by a silent and expectant throng, a great drama

has been transacting upon the heavens. But the night-watchers have departed with the dawn, and there is a brief interval and breathing-space before the morning breeze begins to stir, and the husbandman is abroad in his fields. This solemn pause becomes to the poet's mind a visible shape. The Angel of Night, leaning on his spear, and gazing on the earth the while, waits to be relieved from his ward.

> 'Twas the last watch of night,
> Except what brings the morning quite,
> When the armed angel, conscience clear,
> His task nigh done, leans o'er his spear
> And gazes on the earth he guards;
> Safe one night more through all its wards,
> Till God relieve him at his post.

That is drawn by a hand that does not falter. There is no crowding, confusion, inconsequence, or incompleteness there. The picture is perfectly finished. Nothing could be added, nothing taken away, without incalculable mischief.

Old-fashioned critics and divines mapped the mind into distinct provinces, which we, who have come to regard it as a whole, one and indivisible, are rather apt to treat with disrespect. Still the method was of use; and we may recur, not without advantage, to their angular demarcations and formal lines. Poetry—to use this language—admits of a three-fold division,—lyric, dramatic, and philosophic. High lyric expression, both among men and women, is a rare gift. Lyric

poetry may be described as the incarnation (in a remote way, by hints, suggestions, and implications) of moods of feeling as distinguished from processes of reflection. It does not deal with thought. It is involuntary, spontaneous, unreflective. The lyric is thus the most inartificial form of poetic speech. The man feels joy and grief, and he expresses his joy and grief in this natural music, as the enjoyment of a thrush is expressed in its song. Nor does it describe; it embodies: and in proportion as it ceases to be didactic, and becomes suggestive, the higher is its reach and the more vital its life. An inferior poet is minute, accurate, and laborious; but the true lyrist is prompt, direct, immediate, representative; his outline is bold,—not depending on delicacy of shade or variety of touch. He does not discuss nor moralise; he puts his representation before us, and leaves us to interpret its signs and draw the necessary conclusions. And suggestiveness is so high a quality in lyric poetry, because a mood of feeling is sometimes most vividly presented when it is reflected, so to speak, from a substance of an entirely different colour. There are, moreover, certain subtle moods of feeling which do not bear to be handled, and can only be looked at from a distance. A hint wakens them into consciousness; but they are too brittle, fragile, ethereal, to sustain the weight of elaborate exposition or exact thought. Like a modest rustic maiden who turns away her head, nor looks you full in the face, lyric expression is reticent and shy. The lyric form is followed by the dramatic and the philosophic: the dramatic when by observation

the poet finds that his own impressions are not the impressions of other men; the philosophic when by reflection he essays to determine the relations which he and other men maintain to things. They all, of course, presuppose the imagination. The imagination fuses the hard fact into flexible poetic life. Without imagination the dramatist remains a mimic, the philosopher a logician or a statesman.

Mr. Browning, though possessing much simple and natural ease of expression, is specifically a dramatic and philosophic poet. He is seldom a pure lyrist. The meditative intellect prefers to use the eyes and to speculate through the brain of another. He himself says of the poems least reflective or mimetic in structure, that 'though for the most part lyric in expression, they are always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons.' It is Cleon, or Karshish, or Fra Lippo Lippi, or Andrea del Sarto, who is the spokesman, not Robert Browning. Their talk, indeed, is often lyrical talk; but then such a combination implies more than the untutored expression of personal feeling; it implies besides that that mental operation has been performed which enables a writer to use other eyes than his own, and to conceive how the feeling affected other men. But when the mental operation is once completed, when the author has thoroughly identified himself with the character which he is delineating, the question may indeed arise whether the lyric faculty does not again come purely into play, or whether there be not always a more or less distinct consciousness on

the part of the writer that he is *attitudinising*, playing the part of a mouthpiece, saying something which he does not feel, but which reflection and experience induce him to believe is felt by others. The problem is a nice one. There is probably in such cases a curious mixture of spontaneous and reflective action. A great actor identifies himself with his creations; but the grief which he experiences when his wife dies is not the grief he experiences when representing Hamlet or Macbeth. There can never be in dramatic that absolute surrender to the feeling of the moment from which lyric poetry derives its natural grace. In this sense, indeed, it is not true that the writer who 'identifies himself most completely with his creations' is the greatest or most effective dramatist. A writer who did so would probably want that regulative faculty which enables the dramatist to hold his characters in subjection, to keep them in their proper places and on their own feet. He would be unable to maintain that equipoise, that sovereign impartiality, which permits Shakspeare to pass without pain from the mind of one into the mind of another,—from the vehement irritation of Elizabeth to Glo'ster's tranquil will.

Mr. Browning has written, no doubt, a few charming lyrics. His mystical poems may be hard to interpret; but the crystalline simplicity and transparent naturalness of his shorter compositions are inimitable. Many are homely and studiously truthful as Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*. Others are splendidly coloured,—rich, quaint, and aromatic,—artfully artless, coyly and

reluctantly charming, as Elizabethan song. Others, though obviously unborrowed, have the ring and music, —most particularly perhaps in a certain fanciful and playful inconsequence, an inconsequence, however, which is only apparent, for there is a true imaginative connection, however slight, between the several parts— of the snatches of song in the Old English Drama. Every reader knows, or ought to know, the ride from Ghent to Aix,—a ride which for spirited and rapid movement recalls the pace of Sir Walter's moss-troopers across the border, or Leonore's midnight gallop behind her taciturn groom. How manly ire and passionate regret breathe through *The Lost Leader*! What pale purity, the purity of childhood and of death, in *Evelyn Hope*! What grotesque glory of colour and light in Pippa's *Song of the Python!* What oriental perfume in the ode in *Paracelsus*! What loving extravagance in *The Flower's Name*! What indolent opulence in the *Venetian Lyric*! To which of these gems can we assign a preference? This is the ode in *Paracelsus*:

> Heap cassia, sandal-buds, and stripes
> Of labdanum, and aloe-balls
> Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
> From out her hair;—such balsam falls
> Down sea-side mountain pedestals,
> From mountain summits where tired winds are fain,
> Spent with the vast and howling main,
> To treasure half their island-gain.
>
> And strew faint sweetness from some old
> Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud,
> Which breaks to dust when once unrolled;

And shed dim perfume, like a cloud
From chamber long to quiet vowed,
With mothed and dropping arras hung,
Mouldering the lute and books among
Of queen, long dead, who lived there young.

Now contrast with the intense lights and shadows of Eastern life this stainless picture of an English maiden:

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name—
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir—
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

* * * * *

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while;
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth and the hair's young gold.
So, hush! I will give you this leaf to keep;
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand.
There, that is our secret! Go to sleep;
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

It may be said without any exaggeration that Mr. Browning is one of our greatest dramatists,—perhaps in modern times our very greatest. The greatness of the old dramatists consisted mainly in this,—that they did not weary the emotion which they sought to rouse on a succession of incidents. They did not hurt the simplicity of interest. The meanest detail was a part of a

whole. The tragedy gradually but steadily approached. The talk of serving-women, or the babble of pages, led up to the catastrophe. Mr. Browning understands this art. All the incidents—as in *The Blot on the 'Scutcheon*, one of the most perfectly conceived and perfectly executed tragedies in the language—are grouped around the supreme crisis out of which they spring, and to which they are organically related. The tragedy may cover a life-time; but the one moment, big with fate, burns, like a baneful star, in the centre. He has also a fine eye for the tragic situations which are calculated to elicit our pity, and his plays abound in quick and effective dramatic turns. There are some fine specimens of the latter in *Luria*, in *King Charles and King Victor*, and in *Paracelsus*. The great-hearted general of Florence—whose rich southern nature rises so magnanimously above the acute and politic Florentines whom he serves—has resigned his command to his subordinate Puccio, and taken poison. His last moment, which he waits with supreme tranquillity, is close at hand, when an officer enters the tent. What is amiss? Their enemies, the Lucchese, are on the move.

Hussein. A movement of the Lucchese troops
Southward.
Luria. Toward Florence? Have out instantly—
Ah! old use clings! Puccio must care henceforth!

The aged Victor recovers his crown; but death is upon him; and the failing intellect returns mechanically to the youthful victories of the dying king.

I seek for phrases
To vindicate my right. 'Tis of a piece!
All is alike gone by with me—who beat
Once D'Orleans in his lines—his very lines!
To have been Eugene's comrade, Louis' rival,
And now—

Or, again—

No matter. Guile has made me king again.
Louis—'twas in King Victor's time—long since,
When Louis reigned—and, also, Victor reign'd—
How the world talks already of us two!
God of eclipse and each discoloured star,
Why do I linger then?

And Paracelsus, sick with insult, moody with failure, bitterly incensed, is suddenly softened when he learns that Michal is dead. Very touching, deeply pathetic, is the quick revulsion of feeling which the wounded sage experiences.

Paracelsus. Have you felt sorrow, Festus?—'tis because
You love me. Sorrow, and sweet Michal yours!
Well thought on: never let her know this last
Dull winding up of all; these miscreants dared
Insult me—me she loved: so grieve her not.
Festus. Your ill success can little grieve her now.
Paracelsus. Michal is dead! pray Christ we do not craze!
Festus. Aureole, dear Aureole, look not on me thus!
Fool, fool! this is the heart grown sorrow-proof—
I cannot bear those eyes.
Paracelsus. Nay, really dead?
Festus. 'Tis scarce a month.
Paracelsus. Stone dead!—then you have laid her
Among the flowers ere this. Now, do you know,
I can reveal a secret which shall comfort

Even you? I have no julep, as men think,
To cheat the grave; but a far better secret.
Know then you did not ill to trust your love
To the cold earth; I have thought much of it;
For I believe we do not wholly die.

Festus. Aureole—

Paracelsus. Nay: do not laugh: there is a reason
For what I say: I think the soul can never
Taste death. I am just now, as you may see,
Very unfit to put so strange a thought
In an intelligible dress of words;
But take it as my trust, she is not dead.

Festus. But not on this account alone? You surely—
Aureole, you have believed this all along?

Paracelsus. And Michal sleeps among the roots and dews,
While I am moved at Basil, and full of schemes
For Nuremberg, and hoping and despairing,
As though it mattered how the farce plays out,
So be it quickly played. Away, away!
Have your will rabble! while we fight the prize,
Troop you in safety to the snug back seats,
And leave a clear arena for the brave
About to perish for your sport!—Behold!

One other characteristic of these plays must not be forgotten. Shakspeare excepted, Browning's women are perhaps the sweetest in English poetry. Strongly marked features, the lights and shades of masculine passion, even when complex in structure and enigmatical in expression, may be transferred to the canvas with comparative facility; but the acute and reticent organisation of girlhood is easily wounded, and demands a light hand and quickest sympathy. 'Can't we touch these bubbles then, but they break?' Mr. Browning

has learned this difficult art,—his touch, besides, being wonderfully refined, delicate, and incisive. The helpless charm, the wild-violet-like fragrance, of poor Phæne are exceedingly touching. Colombe,—

> Colombe, our play-queen,
> For whom to furnish lilies for her hair
> We'd pour our veins forth to enrich the soil—

is a queenly girl, bright, strong, loving, and true,—contrasting well with the little dainty Duchess, who, though her eye be soft and dreamy in its blue depths, is yet as merry and piquant and saucy as Gainsborough's charming Mrs. Graham. Then there is Mildred Tresham,—whose childishness (for in truth she is barely more than a child) is combined with the maturity which sin (sin quickening not obscuring her sense of maidenly shame) and pitiful remorse have imported into her life. The whole conception of Mildred, of her guilelessness and helplessness,—

> I was so young—I loved him so—I had
> No mother—God forgot me—and I fell,—

and of her unresisting submission to what, in her startled innocence, she deems the inevitable retribution, is intensely and purely tragic,—more so even than the light talk, the dismal gaiety, the heartlessness and the broken-heartedness, of the unhappy women in *Pippa Passes*.

I have said that Mr. Browning is a philosophical poet. Some people seem to fancy that poetry ought to hold no connection with Philosophy; but in truth

poetry is the handmaid of Philosophy. There are thoughts which the minstrel alone strikes out. The argument of the poet is sometimes more effective than the logician's. He can explain many things which the metaphysician cannot. The radiant imagination of Mr. Browning has wrestled with not a few of the hardest problems of the schools. As a thinker, he is essentially original. *The Two Voices*—Tennyson's most directly philosophical poem—is composed of a series of rather obvious reflections,—profusely adorned, no doubt. It is like a common water-jug, stuck all over with gems and precious stones. No very intricate speculations, no very keen doubts, find expression in that elaborately-polished verse. Mr. Browning does not only adorn,—he originates as well. His imagination flashes light into the dark places. The chasing is rich indeed,—but the pitcher has been designed by Cellini. *Paracelsus* and *Christmas Eve* deal with the weighty issues of the life—divine and human. *Paracelsus* (on which I would willingly linger, as in many respects the most remarkable of Mr. Browning's works, but time fails me) is the record of high hopes defeated, of lofty purposes thwarted, of pure aspirations and an unselfish ambition rendered fruitless. Caricatures of religious fanaticism, coarse, but vigorous and vivacious as Hogarth's, pictures of material nature, pure as summer dawn, frescoes of judgment, heavy with the gloom and pomp of the Sistine, are grotesquely bound up together in *Christmas Eve*. Throughout that singular poem, in verse that halts, and stumbles, and aspires, the poet strives to read,

honestly, patiently, courageously, humbly, the riddle of life and death.

To conclude. As the dramatic is the poetic form which Mr. Browning prefers, we can seldom be sure that we meet the man himself in his poetry. It is, at nearest, one of his many moods—moods which cannot be safely identified with permanent character. On rare occasions, however, we find him appearing *in propriâ personâ*. At these times—in the later years at least—a passion for Italian freedom, and a tender regard for that 'E. B. B.' to whom he offers his latest work, are most noticeable. His voice softens when he speaks of Italy; her name is written upon his heart: and he longs for the day when the national tricolour shall wave over liberated Florence. 'Shall I be alive that morning?' he asks. He has seen the desire of his eyes: and Florence is duly grateful to her English lover.

> This faith was shown
> To Italy, our mother;—she
> Uses my hand and blesses thee.

The nearer and dearer tie has now been hallowed by 'the covenant of the grave.' 'Till death us part, merely?' the great English poetess wistfully inquires in one of her earlier works. 'Till death us part—O poor to be our best for Love the deathless.' Not so, is the burden of that *One Word More* with which the husband closes his volumes. Here I can only lay these poor verses at your feet; but hereafter I may find a worthier return for the great love with which I have been blessed.

This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse, and nothing else, have I to give you:
Other heights in other lives, God willing—
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love.

So—'God willing'—let it be.

AND so I sat and read in the woodland,—while the sun wested, and the shadows of the pines grew long. And then Letty rose and put away her drawing-paper, on which tender intricate wild flowers and modest grasses had begun to bloom, and packed our panniers. Dobbins, who had been idly wandering and ruminating among the ferns, was recalled. As we emerged from the shade of the trees, we saw the blue sea stretched beneath us—miles away—and amid its gold lay fair green islands, unknown to song, but beautiful as those which Ulysses knew.

Clustering near,
Stars of the blue sea, round about him smile
Dulichium, Samë steep, Zacyinthus wood-crowned isle.

As we passed the hay-fields where we had marked the mowers in the morning, we could see now that the rakes and scythes had been put away, and that girls and boys were romping among the ricks. Such, too, had the wise old mariner seen a thousand years before.

Soon did Odysseus, rapt as in a trance,
Mark the loud pulse of feet, the ever-twinkling glance.

And as we went down the glen, through the crimson

sunset, and beneath the pale summer moon (hanging in the sky more for ornament than use), Letty repeated to me an old ditty written by a poet who has sung his last love song,—Giovanni Boccaccio. Its arch playfulness and its gleam of green leaves and golden hair recall, as Mr. Rossetti says, 'the painted pastorals of Giorgione.'

OF THREE GIRLS, AND OF THEIR TALK.

By a clear well, within a little field
  Full of green grass and flowers of every hue,
  Sat three young girls, relating (as I knew)
Their loves. And each had twin'd a bough to shield
Her lovely face; and the green leaves did yield
  The golden hair their shadow; while the two
  Sweet colours mingled, both blown lightly through
With a soft wind for ever stirr'd and still'd.
After a little while one of them said—
  (I heard her)—'Think! If, ere the next hour struck,
    Each of our lovers should come here to-day,
Think you that we should fly, or feel afraid?'
  To whom the others answered, 'From such luck
    A girl would be a fool to run away.'

X.

HORACE LOVELACE.

THE young people are out on the terrace, and they look up at me with a half-sorrowful, half-wistful curiosity. 'Poor old fellow! he knows nothing of this wonderful new invention. He belongs to an earlier age which had not discovered it. The poets, indeed, have told us about love in their old-fashioned verses; but was such a fresh exquisite rapture as ours is ever known before? Happy we, to whom this cunning charm has been first disclosed!'

Yes, truly, love enjoys a perennial youth. There stands the rosy boy—radiant, smiling, beautiful as morn; and there he has stood for ever and ever so long. For how long? Heaven alone can tell. But the story is a very old one; they used to play at it when we were boys,—even in the Doctor's youth, for that matter, as you may have gathered from his Confessions.

You know all about Letty by this time,—but Horace has been seen only transiently, and by-the-by. As we are nearing, however, the crisis of the story, I suppose I must say something more about him. Yet I do not

think I have much to say. He is, regarded from the outside, one of the irreproachable young men of the period. His tie, his collar, his pantaloons, his shooting-coat, are—each in its own way—exact and faultless. He rides well and he shoots well. He is a strong swimmer and a stalwart deer-stalker. His manner is quiet, and slightly reserved; the young man of the period does not indulge in strong colours; and Horace is never excited, nor impatient, nor openly indignant. He can say caustic things when he chooses, but they are uttered with the historical serenity of Lord Westbury. His convictions, if he has any, rather perplex his friends. He is for relaxing the Articles, but he wants a stringent code about poachers. He would rather like to see the Tories in office, but he does not object to universal suffrage. Such is Horace—viewed objectively.

If you wish to know what his mind is like, I cannot do better than ask you to look through this 'Commonplace Book' of his—which I have brought with me—and judge for yourselves. You will find it, moreover, a sort of chronicle of the literary likings and dislikings of the past five-and-twenty years: for Horace was reflective rather than original, and mirrored shadows as water does.

It stretched back almost into his boyish days, when he had a simple creed and untested convictions; when Latin verses were an abomination, and cricket was 'Lord of all;' when he believed in church and catechism, and pastors and masters, and dignitaries in general. But the day arrived when he began to use

his eyes on his own account; when he dared to interrogate men and books and institutions, to look below the surface of things, to see what *the fact* was, and how far he himself and his surroundings were founded upon it and consistent with it. It was Carlyle, I think, who first led him to look beyond the phenomenal shows of sense into the invisible world that lay behind. Such sentences as these, vehemently italicised, fill many of the earlier pages of the book:—'Who am I; what is this Me? A voice, a motion, an appearance; an embodied, visualised idea in the Eternal Mind? *Cogito, ergo sum.* Alas! poor cogitator; this takes us but a little way. Sure enough I am, and lately was not; but whence? How? Where to? The answer lies around, written in all colours and motions, uttered in all tones of jubilee and wail, in thousand-figured, thousand-voiced, harmonious nature; but where is the cunning eye and ear to whom that God-written Apocalypse will yield articulate meaning? We sit as in a boundless phantasmagoria and dream-grotto: boundless, for the faintest star, the remotest century, lie not even near the verge thereof; sounds and many-coloured visions flit round our sense; but Him, the unseen being, whose work both dream and dreamer are, we see not: except in rare waking moments suspect not.' It appeared that to Horace, as to England (as Sterling wrote to Carlyle), 'no man has been and done like you.' Behind the Master, however, came fervid, eager apostles,—Emerson, with his lofty platonism, and his moonlight chastity of style; Kingsley, rich, eloquent, intense; Martineau,

the most imaginative controversialist of the age. One discoursed on our phantasmal life; another inveighed against the corruption of our institutions. Quoth Emerson, 'Here we drift like white sails across the wide ocean, now bright on the wave, now darkling in the trough of the sea—but from what port did we sail? Who knows? There is no one to tell us but such poor weather-tossed mariners as ourselves, whom we speak as we pass, or who have hoisted some signal, or floated to us some letter in a bottle from afar. But what know they more than we? They also found themselves on this wondrous sea. No; from the older sailors, nothing. Over all their speaking-trumpets the grey sea and the loud winds answer: "Not in us, not in time." ' 'And so I left him,' added the author of *Yeast*, 'assuring him that, living in the nineteenth century, I wanted to hear the Church of the nineteenth century, and no other; and should be most happy to listen to her as soon as she had made up her mind what to say.' This was the strong meat on which Horace was fed at the time, and it left him,—eager for truth, but rather uncertain where that commodity was to be had. Out of the believing attitude of childhood he had emerged suddenly, arriving at a frame of mind which mercilessly interrogated the universe, and all that was in it and above it. A period of mental tumult, of mental bewilderment, succeeded. Goethe (with his shrewd, wary step, and his swift dashes into the darkness) seems to have held him captive for a time. The audacious speculations of *Wilhelm Meister* suited a period of

mental energy and recklessness. Yet Horace was an unsteady disciple. One day he would say with the great German, 'I, for my share, cannot understand how men have made themselves believe that God speaks to us through books and histories. The man to whom the universe does not reveal directly what relation it has to him; whose heart does not tell him what he owes to himself and others; that man will scarcely learn it out of books, which generally do little more than give our errors names.' And next day the frankness, the honesty, the lofty temperance, the admirable fairness, the devout intelligence of Maurice, would win him back to his moorings, and assure him that natural religion, without a personal declaration of the Divine, was a feeble, if not sophistical teacher.

Then he began to *acquiesce. Carpe diem.* I find at this stage many extracts from the familiar writings of David Hume. One is emphatically marked, 'I believe I shall write no more history, but proceed directly to attack the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and the Single Catechism, and to recommend suicide and adultery; and persist until it shall please the Lord to take me unto himself.' This tone of humorous sceptical listlessness was the one which Horace began to use. In literature, in politics, in religion—*laissez faire.* In literature—are we greater than our fathers? In religion—why chaos,—whereof Coleridge says, 'The very *cats* ran against each other,' —is not darker than theology. In politics—are not our institutions only more rotten than they used to be?

And when they said, 'But Reform will cure them,' he answered, 'I do not know. Yet it seems to me that the most radical reform of the past thousand years has not come to much—is only, as seen through and through by our greatest moralist, "the somnambulism of uneasy sleepers."' Thackeray, with admirable literary skill, in words keen with the polish of the scholar, and yet fearlessly idiomatic, has portrayed this acquiescent attitude. 'There it is,' said Pendennis, speaking of the British Constitution, 'extant among us, a part of our habits, the creed of many of us, the growth of centuries, the symbol of the most complicated tradition. There stand My Lord the bishop, and My Lord the hereditary legislator—what the French call *transactions*, both of them—representing in their present shape mail-clad barons and double-sworded chiefs (from whom their lordships—the hereditaries—for the most part *don't* descend), and priests professing to hold an absolute truth and a divinely inherited power, the which truth absolute our ancestors burned at the stake, and denied there: the which divine transmissible power still exists in print, to be believed or not, pretty much at choice; and of these I say, I acquiesce that they exist, and no more. If you say that these schemes, devised before printing was known, or steam was born; when thought was scared and whipped; and truth, under its guardians, was gagged and swathed and blindfolded, and not allowed to lift its voice, or to look out, or to walk under the sun; before men were permitted to meet, or to trade, or to speak with each other—if any one says (as some faith-

ful souls do) that these schemes are for ever, and having been changed and modified constantly, are to be subject to no further development or decay, I laugh, and let the man speak. But I would have toleration for these, as I would ask it for my own opinions; and if they are to die I would rather they had a decent and natural than an abrupt and violent death.' 'Fight on, thou brave, true heart,' Carlyle had once urged him, 'and falter not, through dark fortune and through bright. The cause thou fightest for, so far as it is true—no farther, yet precisely so far—is very sure of victory: the falsehood of it alone will be abolished, as it ought to be.' Such was the brave counsel he had listened to; and yet, from some incurable defect in himself, or in the age, it had arrived at this only—a languid and half-hearted, if good-natured, consent to 'the previous question.' It had left him tolerant indeed, and ready to say, with the Protector, 'Sir, the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions: if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies;' but I do not know that this tolerant habit rested on any ground of principle: it was rather the indolent conclusion—Why persecute the false till we have found the true?

The useful sciences, politics and theology, being thus disposed of—having been tried and found wanting—he turned for occupation to the imaginative. We cannot explain life: but, at least, art and poetry may adorn it, and make it more pleasant to the taste. In art—which is imagination made visible—he found great living masters. The spell of De Quincey and the magic of

Ruskin were upon the land. As the earlier extracts from *Modern Painters* are taken from the diminutive pamphlet 'by an Oxford Graduate,' which was to rise into a noble monument, Horace must have been among the earliest disciples of the new religion. One cannot wonder, even now, that that magical style should have cast its glamour over many converts. Certainly the tough mother-tongue—'our English,' as Milton says proudly—has never been so plastic as in the hands of this Oxford graduate. In our own age, three great masters of speech—Newman, De Quincey, and Ruskin—have evoked in a surprising manner the sweetness and strength of the English language. Dr. Newman writes a remarkably simple, transparent, and pellucid style. But how the colourless diamond blade flashes when he wields it! De Quincey unites with a like fearless simplicity, and a like eminent exactness, and almost Oriental splendour. Though, as a rule, neither so simple nor so exact, there are occasional bursts of melody in *The Stones of Venice* which are inimitable—as inimitable as the dew, or the twilight, or the lark's song. With what a thrill of delight and wonder did we read for the first time certain of the passages which I find quoted in this book. One, in particular (I read it at Torcello once, lying among the long rank sedges which hide the barrenness of that most barren island), invariably recurs to me at morning service, when the 95th Psalm is being read, and has, indeed, to me, invested that psalm with an altogether new significance. These are the closing lines: 'And if the stranger would

yet learn in what spirit it was that the dominion of Venice was begun, let him ascend the highest tier of the stern ledges that sweep round the altar of Torcello, and strive to feel in himself the strength of heart that was kindled within them, when first within the shelter of its knitted walls, amidst the murmur of the waste of waves, and the beating of the wings of the sea-birds round the rock that was strange to them, rose that ancient hymn, in the power of their gathered voices:

> The sea is his, and he made it,
> And his hands prepared the dry land.'

Not less fascinating was the ethereal dream-work of De Quincey,—ethereal, yet showing a 'knitted strength,' which proved that the imagination, however apparently grotesque and capricious, was always true to itself and regulated by highest law. Most ethereal, yet saddest of dreamers, who taught you to put into perishing words that wail of exquisite pain—that undying lament? 'The dream,' he says somewhere, 'so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and from languishing prostration in hope and vital energy, the constant sequel of lying down before him, publishes the secret frailty of human nature; reveals its deep-seated Pariah falsehood to itself; records its abysmal treachery.' A very pitiful side of human nature, doubtless, as he himself knew bitterly; but how grandly, how variously, has he idealised it! You recollect, perhaps, that last and saddest phase of his *Vision of Sudden Death*? Even if you do (but it is little known), you may read it again and again, and never weary of its witch-like music.

'Sweet funereal bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl adorned with a garland of white roses about her head for some great festival, running along the solitary strand in extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic; and often she looked back as to some dreadful enemy in the rear. But when I leaped ashore, and followed on her steps, to warn her off a peril in front, alas! from me she fled as from another peril; and vainly I shouted to her of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran; round a promontory of rock she wheeled out of sight; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sands gathering above her head. Already her person was buried; only the fair young head and the diadem of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens; and, last of all, was visible one marble arm. I saw by the early twilight this fair young head as it was sinking down to darkness—saw this marble arm as it rose above her head, and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching, as at some deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds —saw this marble arm, uttering her dying hope and her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm, these all had sunk; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth except my own solitary

tears, and the funereal bells from the desert seas, that rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child, and over her blighted dawn. I sat and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth our mother.'

Then he had turned to the poets—first to the poets of his own time, as was meet. His progress here had been rapid, if not satisfactory. Starting with Campbell and Crabbe, satisfied for a season with the imaginative, if somewhat monotonous, seriousness of Wordsworth, and the lyrical perfection of Tennyson, he had at last enlisted under the colours of the great poetical heretic of the day, Robert Browning. The harsh strains of that crabbed lyre had proved more seductive to him, as to many of his contemporaries, than the smoothest and most dulcet music,—incapacitating him, in fact, for the enjoyment of any other music. In the first pages of the book I found this poem, by an American poet—which I quote entire, as typical of a form of feeling and expression then widely popular :—

IN THE DARK.

There 's Kate, with a cheek like a cherry,
And the bountiful lips of our Jess,
And the wicked blue eyes of dear Cissy,
And little Nell's lavish caress.

And we fill the broad bowl to the brim,
And we chorus brown cheek and white arm,
And we strew yellow ringlets with rose-buds,
And we ask, with a jest, 'Where 's the harm?'

Yet they say that pale Isabel stands
  At the feet of our Lord in grace,
Pressing her innocent hands,
  In shame, to her angel face.

Because that the man of her heart,
  Of her maiden faith and desire,
Has forgotten his snow-white dove,
His innocent angel love,
  And wallows and routs in the mire.

Because that a soul when lost
  Can never be washed in the river
Which flows by the palace of God,
  Where she weeps for ever and ever.

So they say: yet, it may be, she knows,
  While she sobs in the blaze of light,
  While she sobs in her robe of white,
That he never forgets—oh! never—
  How Isabel died in the night.

Then the poetical extracts closed with this from Robert Browning's *Prospice:*

I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
    The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
    And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it; fare like my peers,
    The heroes of old;
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
    Of pain, darkness, and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
    The black minute 's at end,
And the element's rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
    Shall dwindle, shall blend,

Shall change, shall become first a peace, then a joy,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

The difference between these is, I think, the difference between our earlier and latest poetical taste; the first languid, morbid, and affected; the second terse, intense, breathing a high moral atmosphere, abating the natural dread of death, making us even eager to know 'the whole of it,' to 'fare like our peers,' to take our stand at the post of honour and of danger—of utter glory or discomfiture. 'To me, at least, no easy Enoch-like translation. My heaven of joy upon her breast will be the fuller because, like her, I have passed through the peril and the pain of death.'

Not that Horace had been, even in poetical matters, a constant disciple. He was as fickle as Peter. One day he was eager for Milton and the Commonwealth; the next for Dryden and the Restoration. It was Prior to-night; and Pope in the morning. Then, wearying of the studied art and mechanical graces of the Augustan poets, he would return to the pure well of English undefiled,—to the dim and ghostly visions of beauty in which Spenser and our early poets delight,—

Women or unwedded maids
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love.

Such was the intellectual character and culture which this commonplace book disclosed. At least it was thus

that I read it. And my conclusion was that of Scripture —'Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.' The great vice of our time—indecision, a want of fidelity to definite conviction—was stamped upon it. It manifested a highly-cultivated intelligence; but that was all: the cultivation had led to nothing. And thus I did not obtain much comfort when I inquired, Are you fickle among your books only, or will you know your own mind better when you mix with real men and women?

Horace, of course, has an answer ready. 'You say that I have no decided convictions,' he observes. 'But, at present prices, can a man afford to keep decided convictions on less than 1,500*l.* a year?'

XI.

LADY GRISEL'S CAMPAIGN.

'THE young people are out on the terrace.'

Do you mean that they should remain there till Doomsday? the indulgent reader inquires not prematurely.

At length we are ready to start. The procession is marshalled now. It is to be a rustic idyll—an idyll of hawthorn hedges and the milking pail—and we are to have shepherds with their oaten pipes, and sonsy wenches with their tubs on their heads, and strawberries and cream, and lamb and mint sauce, all the year round. This is the kind of adventure before us, and you know who the *dramatis personnæ* are to be. Not that our pastoral is to want its tragic side. Anchises dwells peacefully among the sheep-cots upon Ida, little dreaming of the hurricane of battle that is to sweep him and his people across the sea. Into our quiet life also an apple of discord has been cast. The siege of Troy, says Sir William Napier, has only been once repeated—at the siege of Sebastopol. But many a Juno has nourished her jealous ire, and Helen's beauty has crazed stronger

men than Paris, since the war-horses of Rhesus crossed Scamander.

Heroes, in the Heroic ages, fought for the hand of a woman. But we have no heroes remaining—at least since the Napiers died. Our greatest novelist could not find one, and his best novel in consequence was professedly 'without a hero.' So that, as Queen Victoria's laureate has said, the old order is inverted. Maidens, 'stiff with hoops and armed with ribs of whale,' enter the lists of love, and Briseis carries off the King of Men to her tent. There is a glut in the matrimonial market. A hundred blue-eyed slaves are at little Lord Lollipop's feet. But the ungallant little monster is more coy than a school-girl. Were he the Queen of Beauty he could not be charier of his smiles.

Letty had given her virgin heart, or at least a bit of it, to Horace. He, too, in his turn, had been taken captive. But no words of wooing had passed between them. And now a formidable competitor had entered the arena. On the croquet-green and at the butts, chaperoned by her grandaunt, Lady Grisel, Bell Baillie was a rival not to be despised. Yet, had there been no traitor in the camp, Lady Grisel might have sat down before our entrenchments in vain. But the shrewd old woman knew her cards, and played them dexterously. Horace himself was the weak point of our defence.

I am quite impartial; and I may own that Bell was an attractive girl in her way. Nay more, that there was much in such a girl to captivate Horace. Our pub-

lic life is a life of incessant bustle, and we want repose at home. Bell's white dress, pure eyes (round, large, and blue, like the eyes of Jeanne d'Arc in her portrait in the Louvre, or those of the saints in Angelico's pictures of heaven), and Madonna-like face, satisfied him as one of Raphael's pictures satisfied him—especially after a battle-royal with Letty. And battles-royal they had. Thus.

Horace protested loudly against conventionality, yet to the bottom of his soul he was the slave of custom. He feared the world and what the world said; and he feared its ridicule even more than he feared its passion. Now Letty was utterly fearless. The brave, simple, childlike soul needed no drapery. That daring simplicity—those vehement flashes of irony, of passion, of scorn for every form of social baseness—frightened the man of the world. They disturbed his repose. This electric creature was dangerous to handle; and Horace, with the prudence which characterises our boys, began to think at times, but at times only as yet, that it would be safer to contemplate it from a distance.

I do not wish to be hard on Horace (who was certainly not worse than his neighbours), and I don't mean to say that Letty was faultless. Far from it: had she been faultless she would not have been the charming piece of flesh and blood that she was. She was richly endowed, indeed; but her stealthy charm was not appreciated by commonplace men. It was too fine for their senses. Believing much, yet ready to challenge; defying womanly weakness, yet yielding passionately to

rities of the monarchy; and the politician who is untrue to his whipper-in is as dangerous to the public weal as the soldier who is untrue to his colours. It is the soldier's duty to fight, and not to deliberate. If he dislike his business he can leave it; but experience has proved that a greater wrong is done to society when a soldier challenges the righteousness of his orders than when, obeying his orders, he draws his sword in an unrighteous war. The same rule applies to the politician. He must vote as he is required. He may view a particular move with disfavour; yet, as part of the campaign organised by his responsible leader, it is his duty to aid in its execution. If he refuse to do so he provokes mutiny, and makes discipline impossible. These, in a public life constituted as ours is, are greater evils than the sacrifice of an individual opinion. The opinion may be just; but to act upon it, in face of orders, is a crime as well as a folly.

Even the Commodore became conscious at last that there was thunder in the air. Neither he nor I—'the gleanings of hostile spears'—were anxious to take any active share in the coming struggle. Our campaigns are virtually over, and contest does not suit the quiet humour of our decline. 'This gets tragic,' I said to him one day. 'Let us go to the moors.' And so, shouldering our guns, we went up to the hills.

XII.

THE AUTUMNAL MORALISTS.

BEN ARDOCH is the king of hills, and Glen Douglas is the queen of the valleys that nestle about his knees.

To Glen Douglas we are bound.

Old Donald goes not with us: Donald for many months has been 'sair hadden doon' with rheumatism, that plague of the sportsman; and young Angus Riach, sharp-eyed as a glede, sure-winded as a stag-hound, comes in his place.

Ardarnan stands, as you know, on the shore of an inland loch,—an arm of the sea which runs in an irregular and capricious way far into the interior of the island. One is rather surprised at first to meet the sea in such an unlikely place. How has it contrived to insinuate itself into this mountain-locked valley? It is difficult to fancy the ocean apart from bluff headlands round which the white gulls wheel, or lonely sandy beaches where the tarrock breeds, and on which the long wave breaks. Yet this is truly the sea. This quiet tarn, on which the hill-shadows rest so softly, and round which the crofter is now reaping his scanty

harvest of oats, or herding his shaggy black-faced flock, is a branch of the great Atlantic. It is as salt as the sea. It ebbs and flows with the sea. At Venice they have the tide in their streets. Here we have it among bean-fields and corn-fields. The Viking has been tamed. He has beaten his spear and his battle-axe into agricultural implements, and leads a pastoral life.

I do not know any place where the sportsman and the naturalist ought to be happier than here. The hills are purple with heather, and the heather is thickly peopled. From your bedroom window, in these mild autumn mornings and evenings, you hear the muir-cocks crowing valiantly. The black game haunt the roots of the pines, and a brace of spotted ptarmigan can be had any day upon the crest up yonder. The marsh across the loch is a famous resort of the mallard, and the loch itself is loved by the Arctic wild-fowl. Already 'long strings of geese' are flying southward in double file from their northern breeding-places. A flock occasionally pauses in mid-air, and after describing a series of eccentric circles, plunges clamorously into the cool water. A pair of black-throated divers built their nest this summer among the reeds on the island, and they are now to be seen every afternoon—attended by a couple of diverlings, or little divers, the fruit of their industry—about the centre of the bay.

Your boyish tastes leave you as you grow old,—as the grey steals into your hair, and the chill into your heart; but I am thankful that even yet I have not quite lost the early passion for 'the rod and the gun;

and that on occasion I can still handle either. It is worth living a twelvemonth to bring down a brace of grouse, right and left, on the morning of the twelfth. A snap-shot at a woodcock in a young spruce-cover is almost too severe an enjoyment for creatures who are merely mortal. I fancy that there must be wild-duck in Paradise, and that they will rise out of the reeds there exactly as they do now, with this difference only, that they will be oftener within range. Let us return thanks for the mercies bestowed upon us. You and I have indeed good reason to be grateful that, while landing a sea-trout, or creeping on a wild-duck, our hearts still beat as anxiously and eagerly as when we were boys.

Yet I own that I am now rather inclined to leave the hard work to the younger men. They walk their twenty or thirty miles across the heather, and bring back their twenty or thirty brace of birds a day; while, attended by Angus, I scramble across the moss for a chance shot at a mallard, or saunter about the burn-mouth, where the big sea-trout lie. Trout-fishing is a sport for the gods. Sportsmen wax eloquent upon the salmon. A battle-royal with a salmon, such as I read of the other day, which lasted from four o'clock of the afternoon till four o'clock of the summer morning, where the monster was five feet in length, and must have weighed fifty pounds, if an ounce, is fit for Homer's muse. One does not like to scrutinisetoo closely the blank feeling of dismay which the fisher must have experienced when, after that twelve hours'

'tug of war,' his line 'came in loose,' and the conviction flashed across his mind that the monster was off. Was it worth his while to continue in this perplexed and imperfect world any longer? But, upon the whole, I cannot help regarding salmon-fishing as vanity and vexation. You stagger about the river-bank with a piece of elm, like the mast of a small schooner, in your hands. The labour of whipping the water with that gigantic flail is overwhelming. When you do hook a fish, it may be that you are in a measure repaid; but then you generally *don't*. Trout-fishing, on the contrary, is a pleasing and gentle excitement. You carry a light rod, which does not weary your arm—merely bringing the muscles agreeably into play; and you occasionally succeed in getting something more than the 'fine rise' on which the salmonist harps. You have leisure to relish your weed, and to enjoy the architecture of cloud and tree, of hill and river-bank. Even at its best, salmon-fishing is a somewhat sorrowful amusement, a melodrama which keeps all the faculties on the stretch,—

> A tale divine of high and passionate thoughts,
> To their own music chanted;

whereas trout-fishing is like the light comedy, which assimilates peaceably with a bottle or two of the '44. 'It is,' as Walton says, 'that most honest, ingenuous, quiet, and harmless art of angling;' or, as Sir Harry Wotton found it, 'a rest to the mind, a cheerer of the spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet

thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness.'

Angus is engaged upon a captivating fly, so I lay my rod down upon the sand—for the tide flows to where we are stationed—and retreating under the shelter of the bank, spend the next half-hour with Mr. Izaak Walton. Don't you find that you relish the *Complete Angler* to-day more keenly than you did five-and-twenty years ago? I know that I do; and that I cherish quite a different feeling for the kindly, sweet-tempered, studious, gentlemanlike old 'fogy,' than I did then. In truth, he rather bored us at first. We wanted to know directly what bait to select, or how to busk a particular fly, and we found that these pedantic courtesies and formal introductions rather came in the way. But no good fisher or good man can long resist the benevolent simplicity of his manners, the goodness and sweetness of his heart. We may smile occasionally at the high office which he assigns to his favourite art among the arts; at the virtues which it breeds, and the capacities which it demands. We may fancy that Walton, when he asserts that 'angling is something like poetry,—men are to be born so: I mean with inclinations to it, though both may be heightened by discourse and practice; but he that hopes to be a good angler must not only bring an inquiring, searching, observing wit, but he must bring a large measure of hope and patience, and a love and propensity to the art itself,' is only a little less extravagant than Markham, who assures us, in his *Country Contentments*, that the

angler must be 'a general scholar, and seen in all liberal sciences; as a grammarian to know how to write a discourse of his art, and in true and fitting terms. He should have sweetness of speech, to entice others to delight in an exercise so much laudable. He should have strength of argument, to defend and maintain his profession against envy and slander. Then must he be strong and valiant; neither to be amazed with storms, nor affrighted by thunder: and if he is not temperate, but hath a gnawing stomach that will not endure much fasting, but must observe hours, it troubleth the mind and body, and loseth that delight which maketh the pastime only pleasing.' But then we know that some of the best of men have been fishers,—from the time of the prophet Amos, 'concerning whom,' Piscator observes, 'I shall make but this observation, that he that shall read the humble, lowly, plain style of that prophet, and compare it with the high, glorious, eloquent style of the prophet Isaiah (though they be both equally true), may easily believe Amos to be, not only a shepherd, but a good-natured plain fisherman: which I do the rather believe, by comparing the affectionate, loving, lowly, humble Epistles of St. Peter, Saint James, and Saint John, whom we know were all fishers, with the glorious language and high metaphors of Saint Paul, whom we may believe was not.' We know that 'that holy poet, Mr. George Herbert,' loved angling; 'and,' as Venator adds, 'I do the rather believe it because he had a spirit suitable to anglers, and those primitive Christians that you love, and have

so often commended.' We know that Dr. Paley held it in high esteem,—so much so that when the Bishop of Durham asked him when his great work would be finished, he answered innocently, as if fly-fishing and not philosophy were the business of his life, 'My Lord, I shall work steadily at it when the fly-fishing season is over!' And we know that glorious old Christopher North has written a book of wonderful idylls upon the craft of which he was so great a professor. Who are you, then, who dare to ridicule the vocation which prophets and apostles, which bishops, and poets, and philosophers, have held in honour?*

Then, of course, there are innumerable other methods of consuming time. The tide rises to the drawing-room window, so that Ardarnan is an admirable place for boating; and all day long the water is covered with tiny craft, manned (if I may use the word) by angelic beings in crinolines and wideawakes, who stir the echoes of the lonely hills—

> With silken murmurs and elastic sounds
> Of lady-laughters light.

A turf that is softer than velvet and 'greener than emeralds newly broken,' is (as Dante observes) peculiarly suited for croquet; and that seductive pursuit—

* Not to mention the genial and able editor of the *Scotsman*, one of the best of fishers, whose little book on *The Natural History of the Salmon* is a fine specimen of bright, rapid, and vigorous logic,—a solid and weighty argument, stated with judicial precision and impartiality, if sometimes perhaps with more than judicial liveliness.

which seems to have been beneficently invented to invite public attention to a neat ankle; for a pretty foot under an artfully tucked-up petticoat, never looks prettier than when placed on a croquet-ball—occupies the hour after breakfast and the hour before dinner very judiciously. Then besides the sea-trout in the burn, and the grouse and ptarmigan on the mountains (from the top of which the view over the distant Atlantic is glorious beyond words) there is a famous hill-side seamed by alder and fern-fringed *glenlets*, adown whose pebbly bottoms the purest water in the world gushes, where a shot at an old black-cock may be had of an autumn afternoon. Did you ever shoot a patriarchal black-cock? If you have, go down on your knees and thank the gracious Immortals; for few joys in this bad world are more ravishing than the spectacle of an 'heroic black-a-moor' (to use the words in which Sir Charles Napier commemorated his enemy, Hoche Mohamed Seedee) wrestling with death in mid-air, and then descending, with a mighty *thud*, on the heather. Such a joy was vouchsafed to the present writer not many days since; and it is needless to add that, having bathed his face in the clear stream (for the day was oppressively sultry), he laid his victim out in tender state at his feet, and smoked a pipe of thanksgiving over the illustrious dead. A day whose characters are traced in gold! And then—as he went home that evening down the woody glen and across the lake—what magical blues and purples and violets upon the mountain peaks, behind which the sun had newly sunk, and what a glory

of mystical light—mystical as the light in the *Morte d'Arthure*, the light with which poets and painters have invested Arthur, and Guenevere, and Lancelot—upon the mountain sides! And then—when the other shore was reached—what welcome from friends, old and new, who waited him on the beach!—foremost among them, of course (Scotch blue-bells twisted through the sashes of their bonnets, and their hands filled with brilliant sea-shells), two twin maidens six years old—the daintiest little angels out of heaven,—whose blessing rests continually on that happy innocence and spotless purity. Cannot we recover the blameless life? Is there no Bethesda pool in which to bathe the stained soul and the wearied body? Let us lie down, my pets, on this grassy bank, and you shall teach me the innocent secret of childhood. In vain: in vain. Even the great and wise Paracelsus, who was uncorrupted by the logic of the schools, did not believe that such a cure could heal.

> A spotless child sleeps on the flowering moss—
> 'Tis well for him; but when a sinful man,
> Envying such slumber, may desire to put
> His guilt away, shall he return at once
> To rest—by lying there?

Such are the autumn days of the sportsman; but if you are not a sportsman, sit down by the autumnal sea, and muse over the autumnal moralists. There are a set of books that I always keep for autumn, that harmonise well with the yellow fields, and the ripe berries, and the noise of rooks 'that gather in the waning woods.' Some writers never grow old. They have discovered

that *elixir vitæ* for which the Alchemist strove more eagerly than he did for gold. Sydney Smith was one of them. He enjoyed perpetual youth. The letters written by him in advanced years are as bright and buoyant as those he wrote when at college. His animal spirits never flagged—his boyish spring and *abandon* never wearied. The same may be said of the tender and whimsical humanity of Charles Lamb. Lamb does not *age*. All his life he is like a boy in a man's coat. It would seem, in fact, as though there were some ethereal quality in wit which embalms the faculties, and prevents decay. These wise witty men—Thomas Hood, Lamb, Sydney Smith (and Sydney Smith was as wise as he was witty, being, in truth, one of the shrewdest and soundest thinkers of his day)—are perennial springs which do not dry up. There are other virtues, no doubt, which keep one young. We cannot fancy Charlotte Brontë, for instance, growing old; nor is it easy to associate that keen, bright, eager, passionate, anxious, inquiring spirit with grey hairs and a wrinkled brow. The soul would have retained its youth. The blade would have remained sharp and luminous to the last, whatever became of the scabbard.

I know scarcely any letters more delightful than those written by some of those wonderfully witty people to children and grandchildren. They do not unbend for the nonce; were they to unbend the charm would depart; but they do not need to unbend, for they are children at heart, and the language of childhood is their native tongue. The trenchant faculty is seen at play—

like sheet lightning, which carries no bolt or sting, and whose flashes do not hurt. I fancy that a certain great legendary historian must have written many such letters, kind, wise, happily and quaintly nonsensical; but until the time for publication arrives (may it be long deferred!), we must be content with those we have already stored.* But Thomas Hood was the master of the craft. Have we even yet rendered full justice to Thomas Hood? There was an element in his genius—a severe and almost tragic element—which renders him somewhat out of place in the throng of witty and ingenious idlers. Not that he was deficient in the lighter graces and accomplishments that are there imperatively required. On the contrary, for happy and apparently inexhaustible wit, many of his poems are quite unrivalled. But through the pleasant irony of his lighter humour, there runs a vein of exquisite and disguised pathos, as though the strong genius of the satirist were never altogether wanting in earnest tenderness. I love Hood as the brave and honest gentleman, the upright and unaffected reformer, the enemy, to the death, of malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness; but he is never more entirely lovable than when 'babbling o' green fields' to the children of his friends. His daughter has published half-a-dozen of these charming letters, addressed to Dr. Elliot's boys and girls—instinct with fun, tenderness, good-nature, and a lovely purity and uprightness. 'I promised you a letter,' he writes to May,

* W. M. T. Obiit 24 December, 1863.

'and here it is. I was sure to remember it; for you are as hard to forget as you are soft to roll down a hill with. What fun it was! only so prickly, I thought I had a porcupine in one pocket, and a hedgehog in the other. The next time before we kiss the earth we will have its face well shaved.' 'Dunnie' and 'Jeanie' are at the sea-side, and so he discourses to them of its wonders in a style that smacks of the sea-breeze, for he loved the sea. 'Of course you have bathed,' he says to Dunnie, 'but have you learned to swim yet? It is rather easy in salt water, and diving is still easier, even than at the *sink*. I only swim in fancy, and strike out new ideas! Some people say that every ninth wave is bigger than the rest. I have often counted, but never found it come true, except with tailors, of whom every ninth is a man. Then there's fishing at the sea-side. I used to catch flat fish with a very long string line. It was like swimming a kite! The best plan if you want flat fish where there are none, is to bring codlins and hammer them into dabs. Once I caught a plaice, and seeing it all over red spots, thought I had caught the measles.' 'If you do catch a big crab with strong claws,' he tells Jeanie, 'and like experiments, you can shut him up in a cupboard with a loaf of sugar, and you can see whether he will break it with his nippers. I have heard that you bathe in the sea, which is very refreshing, but it requires care; for if you stay under water too long, you may come up a mermaid, which is only half a lady, with a fish's tail, which she can boil if she like. You had better try this with your doll—

whether it turns her into half a "doll-fin." I hope you like the sea; I always did when I was a child, which was about two years ago. When the sea is too rough, if you pour the sweet oil out of the cruet *all over it*, and wait for a calm, it will be quite smooth —much smoother than a dressed salad. Some time ago exactly, there used to be about the part of the coast where you are, large white birds with black-tipped wings, that went flying and screaming over the sea, and now and then plunged into the water after a fish! Perhaps they catch their sprats now with nets, or hooks and lines. Do you ever see such birds? We used to call them "gulls," but they didn't mind it! Did you ever taste the sea-water? The fishes are so fond of it, they keep drinking it all the day long. Dip your little finger in, and then suck it to see how it tastes. The water of the sea is so saline, I wonder nobody catches salt fish in it. By-the-by, did you ever dive your head under water, with your legs up in the air like a duck, and try whether you could cry "quack?" Some animals can. I would try, but there is no sea here, and so I am forced to dip into books. Did you ever try, like a little crab, to run two ways at once? See if you can do it, for it is good fun; never mind tumbling over yourself a little at first.' 'Well, how happy you must be! Childhood is such a joyous merry time; and I often wish I was two or three children! But I suppose I can't be, else I would be, Jeanie, and May, and Dunnie Elliot.' And so he runs on in a vein of happy playfulness, not without a sigh

for the childhood which has passed away, 'about two years ago.' This is 'child's play,' no doubt; but it is the 'child's play' of a great natural wit.

But there are other men who assume old age with cheerfulness, and on whom it sits well, like the cloak of a Venetian noble.

> The clouds that gather round the setting sun,

Wordsworth has said,

> Do take a sober colouring from an eye
> That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.

The attractiveness of the autumnal moralist depends on this 'sober colouring.' Age has mellowed him. The pensive light of sunset lies on his page. Tacitus, who chronicles decay, is the historian; Cowper and Vaughan, the poets; Cervantes and Henry Taylor, the dramatists; Walton, Montaigne, Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, the philosophers—for autumn. *Don Quixote*, like *The Complete Angler*, is never thoroughly understood before middle life. The boy scorns the crazy steed and his crazier rider. But *we*—old campaigners, like ourselves—hold in high honour the benevolent visionary, and feel that that heroic wilfulness, that mild, and garrulous, and upright simplicity, merit the meed that has been bestowed on meaner martyrs. I am not certain which part of Mr. Henry Taylor's admirable *Philip Van Artevelde* I prefer. In the first we have pure love, stainless honour, the confident audacity of youth: in the other, a saddened and somewhat sullied manhood.

But the subdued, mellow, complex lights that touch the sinful passion, and the moody hero, as he nears 'his disastrous journey's doubtful close,' are profoundly interesting, more subtlely and intricately picturesque, perhaps, than the unclouded blaze of his noonday.

But of all the autumnal moralists commend me to Sir Thomas Browne. The rich and involved music of Sir Thomas Browne's imagination, the exquisite freaks and whims, the airy paradoxes, the fine and dainty fretwork, the indolent musings, half melancholy, half humorous, of this remote philosopher, have delighted generations of dreamers. The *Religio Medici* is a ripe book—like the peach just ready to fall, which a single touch will dislodge—but it is not a mature book. This is rather enigmatical, perhaps: but I mean that while there is none of the harshness or rawness of youth in the writer, his character has not matured through a consistent and orderly growth. On the contrary, he has 'ripened' into chronic wilfulness and quaint disfigurement. Yet the charm of the book is inexhaustible. It bears repeated perusal better than any other English writing, Shakspeare's alone excepted, that I am acquainted with. Sir Thomas's egotism—though its display is scarcely so sincere—is as perfect as Montaigne's. 'I know pages of the book by heart,' Horace said to me the other day, 'yet I have not the least idea of what it is all about.' Many of us, I suppose, are in the same predicament. It is difficult to disengage the argument from the riotous paradoxes and eloquent epigrams in which it is wrapt up. The style,

indeed, is so entirely the writer's own, that it is hard to characterise it aright. It is distinguished chiefly, perhaps, by a singular verbal audacity—a perfect fearlessness in the use of words. 'A happy fraud against excessive lamentation;' 'nor any propitiation for the covenant of the grave.' In this respect a modern painter sometimes recalls the Old Master. Both Sir Thomas Browne and Mr. Ruskin use words which other men would hesitate to use,—in unusual situations and in an unlooked-for connection; thereby attaining the pointedness of surprise and the force of epigram. Apart from the richness, colour, and subtle music of the *Religio Medici*—apart from felicity of epithet and fertility of allusion—there is remarkable majesty and natural loftiness in its diction. The writer is perfectly familiar: yet he condescends like a king. One experiences a sensible pleasure in reading such sentences as these, a pleasure which does not depend in any measure upon the sense which they convey. 'Nor must a few differences, more remarkable in the eyes of man than perhaps in the judgment of God, excommunicate from heaven one another, much less those Christians who are in a manner all martyrs, maintaining their faith in the noble way of persecution, and serving God in the fire, whereas we honour him in the sunshine. . . Death is the cure of all diseases. There is no catholicon or universal remedy I know but this, which, though nauseous to queasy stomachs, yet, to prepared appetites, is nectar, and a pleasant potion of immortality. . . . Sleep is that death by which we may be said to die

daily—in fine, so like death, I dare not trust it without my prayers, and a half adieu unto the world, and take my farewell in a colloquy with God. This,' he continues, after quoting some verses of a sacred hymn, 'is the dormative I take to bedward: I need no other laudanum than this to make me sleep: after which I close my eyes in security, content to take my leave of the sun, and sleep unto the resurrection. . . Pagan vain glories, which thought the world might last for ever, had encouragement for ambition, and finding no Atropos unto the immortality of their names, were never damped with the necessity of oblivion. . . . Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next, who, when they die, make no commotion among the dead, and are not touched with that poetical taunt of Isaiah.* . . . . That mystical metal of gold exposed unto the violence of fire,

* 'Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! . . . They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?'—Isaiah xiv. 9–17.

grows only hot, and liquefies, but consumeth not: so when the consumable and volatile pieces of our body shall be refined into a more impregnable and fixed temper, like gold, though they suffer from the actions of flames, they shall never perish, but lie immortal in the arms of fire.' 'Lie immortal in the arms of fire!' There is nothing grander in *Paradise Lost*.

Yet when we come to consider the meaning attentively, we find that in spite of the paradoxical attitude, there is often sagacious insight and sound sense at bottom. 'I can hardly think there was any ever scared into heaven: they go the fairest way to heaven that would serve God without a hell. Other mercenaries that crouch unto him in fear of hell, though they term themselves the servants, are indeed but the slaves of the Almighty. . . . There go so many circumstances to piece up one good action, that it is a lesson to be good, and we are forced to be virtuous by the book.' These are the sober words of a sober thinker. That he should immediately afterwards arrive at the conclusion that 'Eve miscarried of me before she conceived of Cain,' is, no doubt, rather startling: but, after all, not a little of the charm of the book is owing, it must be owned, to this quaint and whimsical logic. '"Before Abraham was, I am," is the saying of Christ: yet it is true in some sense if I say it of myself: for I was not only before myself, but Adam—that is, in the idea of God, and the decree of that synod held from all eternity. And in this sense I say the world was before the creation, and at the end before it had a begin-

ning: and thus was I dead before I was alive: though my grave be England, my dying place was Paradise: and Eve miscarried of me before she conceived of Cain.'

So let us all, during these autumn afternoons, read the *Religio Medici* and the *Urn Burial* once again. You *must* like the good knight of Norwich. Sir Thomas is not, indeed, a very lively writer; for, like most moralists, he loves to wander among the tombs. Shakspeare dallies with death through the mouths of clowns and kings (as in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and that wonderful scene in the fourth act of *Measure for Measure*), and his fooling is more effective than direct and serious treatment could be: yet it is not more effective than the grand and solemn trifling of the *Religio Medici*.

These, and such as these, were my companions last autumn, upon the mountain-side, beside the Mountain Spring, whose lonely, yet cheerful charm has been celebrated in not unmusical numbers:—

> There is a pebbly beach, with jutting slopes
> Of gray and lichened rock, where quiet pool
> And fretting fall go gleaming side by side.
> The feathery mingled copse behind upswells
> Rich with old roots and wealth of ferny green.
> The sparse wild-flowers bloom sweetly down beneath
> The branching sprays, and clustered lower still
> The deep soft mosses grow and spread and cling
> In trails and clumps of verdure. Eglantine
> Hangs in a blushing arch along the bank,
> And flings rose-shadows where we sit below.
> There sitting have we made the soft air rich
> With costly thoughts: the echoes there have heard

> The measured waves of stately-flowing verse,
> Or sweet low pauses of some murmured song,
> Through whose calm heart the minstrel breathed his own.

To-morrow we start for home. Winter is coming down the hill-side, and the quiet meadows and hedge-rows of Hazeldean are fitter for rheumatic Campaigners than this sharp mountain air.

XIII.

NANCY'S TRYST:
A REMINISCENCE OF THE HIGHLANDS.

SINCE our return from the hillside, we have had death on the premises—old Donald, the game-keeper, gardener, coachman, and poacher-in-ordinary to the united households of the Laburnums, has shaken the dust out of his last pair of shoes, and left a world of which he never thought much. Donald did not belong to what, in the slang of translated Cockneys, is called the Gushing School. He was a confirmed grumbler—not indeed venturing to impeach the arrangements of Providence (which in his view had been fixed from a remote period), but by no means desiring to conceal his impression that, generally speaking, his fellow-creatures were a set of arrant bunglers and knaves. The Doctor had, one autumn morning, fished him out of a wet ditch, where he was standing up to his knees in frozen water, watching a flock of wild geese that were feeding in a neighbouring field. Instead of having him up for poaching, the Doctor, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, made him his keeper. He proved a

capital servant; his only fault being that his knowledge of march fences was always of the vaguest; and that the Doctor, when out shooting under his keeper's guidance, frequently found himself in the choicest preserves of his neighbours. But there was a dash of the gipsy in Donald's Celtic blood. He was shy, reserved, *dour*. He did not understand what 'gratitude' meant; he actually bore a grudge against the Doctor for getting him out of the ditch, into which, both literally and metaphorically, he had sunk. For Donald had seen better days. It was said that in his time he had had wife and child. What accident, or train of accidents, had made him a castaway, I did not know. But Donald underwent his reverses like a Stoic, or rather like the Fatalist, which he was. In theological matters Donald belonged to the straitest sect of the disciples of Calvin. It was preordained that he was to become what he had become. So that he bore, or could have borne, the great trials of life, which wear the heart-strings of less robust natures, without murmur or complaint. What was he, that he should challenge the immutable decrees of the Almighty? But accepted in this spirit, his trials did not tend to soften his character. He took them sternly and sourly, and though he never accused his Maker, he made himself very unpleasant to his fellow-creatures. He dug the garden, he groomed the horses, he pruned the pear-trees, in the spirit of a martyr, and under protest. You might have fancied from the expression of his mouth that he was always consuming crab-apples. Occasionally, however, his

habitual sullenness seemed to thaw. Sissy managed him as she thought fit; he could not resist the unclouded eyes, and the frank imperiousness of her childhood. With his gun on his shoulder, too, the spirit of the poacher revived. To the bottom of his heart he was a sportsman, and when he was tramping across the muir, he sometimes forgot that the world was, upon the whole, a failure and a blunder,—especially if birds were abundant and the dogs worked well. The dogs were his speciality; he managed them with admirable tact; he was their guide, philosopher, and friend, and they were his confidants. To them alone, while engaged in their feeding or cleaning, he frankly confided his opinion upon the way in which his fellow-men contrived to mismanage the universe. He grumbled and growled like one of themselves. He would tell Dash that he had as little sense as the Doctor or the Parson, and Juno that she was vainer than a woman. In early times there had been a vein of humour in Donald—and a vein of humour is often the salvation of a man; but this vein, in Donald's case, had long since petrified into a mere fossil.

Donald had been ailing for long. His 'rheumatics,' —the fruit of forays after wild-duck in the winter-moonlight,—were very hard upon him. His imagination indeed, had given his tormentor bodily shape and presence. He spoke of it as of a visible enemy; he had a special commination service which he fired off against it at brief intervals—minute-guns, in the shape of very particular ecclesiastical curses, they might be

reckoned. A chronic warfare had for long been maintained between the Commodore and Donald on the subject of 'thorough draughts.' He constantly averred, with a kirkyard wheeze, that the Captain's system of ventilation would be the death of him. It was with grim satisfaction, consequently, that he felt his end approaching. His blood was on the Captain's head, and he had verified, besides, the accuracy of his views, —two special sources of comfort. Day by day Donald grew more crusty and more of a cripple. At length he was confined to his bed. For many months his assistant, Angus Riach, led a dog's life. Donald insisted on maintaining a general superintendence from his sick-bed; and a dying Nero or Caligula could not have been more imperious and implacable. Then he grew thin and worn—a mere skinful of bones. And one night, about midnight, while the Commodore (who is a bad sleeper) was sitting by his bed, he went out quite suddenly. It had been obvious, indeed, for some days, that he could not last much longer; but the closing scene, somehow, took us by surprise. They had been discussing the breeding of young setters,—Donald defending his own plan of up-bringing, and condemning that practised in a neighbouring kennel, with his habitual acuteness and keenness,—when, without any warning, his sight failed him, his speech began to wander, and he lost the thread of his discourse. But he died, so to speak, in the field. To the last, the old sportsman was among his dogs. 'Juno, my lass, the scent dis'na haud to-night,' were his last articulate words.

Donald's co-religionists—(he was a Reformed Antiburgher: when the Burghers left a godless establishment, which did not give sufficient prominence to the doctrine of final perseverance, they had a division among themselves on the distinction between final and ultimate, which resulted in a fierce Antiburgher secession, and the Reformed Antiburghers, who held that both the Burghers and the Antiburghers were on the road to perdition about original sin, were an offshoot from the latter body)—Donald's co-religionists buried him in their own part of the churchyard, chanting, as a part of the burial-service, the Calvinistic *Te Deum*,—the burden of which (Horace says) runs thus:—

> The mighty dome of heaven is quaking;
> The round earth, like a bubble, breaking;
> Before the Throne the people stand
> On either hand.
> . . . .
> The goats are cast into the fire
> For ever burning higher:
> But the sheep feed upon the lea
> And fatten through eternity.
> . . . .
> With joyful hearts the elect shall raise
> Perennial praise:
> 'Duly let us His grace extol;
> He *might* have damned us all.'

About a week after Donald had been laid in the churchyard, Horace and I were sitting with the Commodore in the sanctum, where he keeps his birds, bulky rolls of cavendish, such as they smoke in the navy, his

scanty wardrobe, his big Bible, an odd volume of Sir Walter's novels, *The Lady of the Lake*, his hammock, a chest containing garden-twine, tinder, nails, needles and thread, a bowie-knife, beeswax, sweet-oil, and other odds and ends. The day was wet and dirty, and we had been smoking industriously for hours,—upon the whole silent, and devoting our minds chiefly to the contemplation of the weather. 'Would you like to hear an old story?' the Commodore asked us at last. 'It happened lang syne; but Donald's death somehow has brought it back to my mind.'

We expressed our willingness to listen, and the Commodore commenced,—I use his own North-country tongue where it seems to add force to the story, but it is not necessary to represent it with entire fidelity.

'Donald and I were early cronies; he was constantly about our farm-town afore I went on board the *Wasp*. He used to take me along with him when he gaed to the hills, and what I am about to relate happened on one of our sportin' trips.

'There's a great change in the country,' continued the Commodore, 'since I mind it first. In those days we could shoot from the sea-shore to the Grampians, up the whole valley of the Dee, without seeing a keeper. I was only a bairn at the time, for the century was barely begun; but Donald was a strapping lad, one of the best shots, and one of the neatest legs in the country side. His temper, however, was not to be lippened to; he could be as glum and dour as a nor'-easter when he liked. Well, we started from the lowlands one fine

morning in September, meaning to be away for a week, Donald carrying an auld musket, that had been "oot" in the '45, across his shoulder, and whiles gien me a lift, when my feet gat sair, and the ground was stiffer than ordinar. We soon left the low country behind us; it was a different place from what it is now; there were only casual patches of corn and neeps, such as you see among the outlying crofts on the hill-side before you get fairly among the heather; not a field was drained, and the snipe and wild-deuk were rising like laverocks among our legs. We soon got upon the muir, however, and a fine day's sport we had; I say "we," though it was Donald who filled the bag, and I only got a sittin' shot at a white hare, whiles. The first day we were content with grouse and black-cock, and we had a heavy bag by the evening, when we came to a private still in a deep glen ahint Tillymaud,—weel kent to Donald. We stayed with the smugglers for the night, Donald happing me up in his plaid among the heather, and leaving me to look at the stars, while he himself and his smuggling friends tested the strength of the brew. It was the first time I slept in the open air, and it seemed like the beginning of a new life to me. Though September, the air was heavy and sultry, and the thunder growled and muttered a' night among the corries of Morven. Then ever and again a white flash of lightning dimly disclosed the haill scene up to the very summits of the mountains; and just as I was fa'in' asleep, a herd of red deer, terrified by the flashes, swept past me,—like a troop of startled ghosts. Next

morning we bathed in the burn which fed the still, and the bit willow wand which served me for a walking-stick got us a breakfast of splendid red trout in half-an-hour. I dinna believe the trout thereabouts had ever seen a fly before,—at least they rose to a rough cast of Donald's as freely as if they had been busked by Phin or Mrs. Hogg. All day we travelled up the beautiful valley,—sometimes low down in its heart, beside the clear waters of the rapid Dee; sometimes high up among the crags (for Donald had promised to shoot an eagle for the Laird), and getting glimpses, on one hand, of the great hills at the head of the pass, on the other, of the blue sea, and the yellow sand, and the green woods from which we had started. Never a human soul did we meet, savin' a shepherd or a lad poaching like ourselves; but before the sun gaed down Donald had shot a royal stag, and a golden eagle, and so—the next day being the Sabbath—we fixed to bide wi' a gudebrither of Donald's, who was shepherd to the then Laird of Haddo, and had a sheiling aboon Cairnbannow. There never was a lovelier Sabbath-day; we sat oot afore the door, the men smoking their pipes and talking over the news till it was time for kirk; and then we started across the hill to Lumphanan, for it was the Sacramental Sabbath, and auld Doctor MacAlister was to fence the tables, and a young lad from the King's College (the son o' a neighbouring laird) was to preach his first discourse. So there was a great thrang in the kirkyard; from every sheiling, on hill-side or glen, the folk cam' troopin' in,—stalwart lads, bonny lasses, and

grey-headed patriarchs, wha minded the '45, and had been hunted by the red-coats after Culloden. It was the last communion that some of them gaed to at Lumphanan; for a hard winter followed, and there was a sair thinnin' among the auld carles. However that might be, little was thocht of it then; for it was a day to mak' the auld feel young, and there was a deal of daffing among the hill lads in their brown kilts, and the lasses in their tartan snoods, afore we gaed into the kirk. Oot o' a' sight the comeliest lass there was Nancy Roy. She was the lily of their valley, and as good as she was bonny. I have seen sweet faces and lithe figures since then; but I think yet that Nancy was the very prettiest girl I ever saw in my life. They were a' proud of her, up hill and down dale: and it used to be said that the sang which begins—

> Oh, Nancy's hair is yellow as gowd,
> And her e'en, like the lift, are blue—

was made for Nancy Roy. She was her very image, at least; yallow hair, blue eyes, a saft skin, a sunny laugh, the nicest, sweetest, deftest little woman, with the maist astonishin' ankles, which showed to perfection under her short coat o' shepherd tartan. But before I go on I must tell you something further about Nancy.

'She was the daughter of Duncan Roy, the Duke's foreman at Craigdarroch. His cottage stood on the river-bank, just about a mile below the cradle. But you'll no mind the cradle; the brig at Dalnowhinnie was biggit afore your time. Weel, the cradle was a contrivance for crossing the river; a

rope was thrown across at a deep narrow passage, and fastened to the high banks on baith sides. On this rope a wicker basket was slung, and the man who wanted to cross placed himself in this basket, and pulled himself along the rope, hand over hand. It needed a strong arm and a steady head; for when you were half-way across, the basket swung about like the branch of a poplar, and you were fifty feet above the water, which ran there like a mill-lead. Howsomever, the country folk had been content with the invention (which was worked precisely like one of Manby's rockets) from the beginning of time, and there was no other way of crossing, unless you chose to walk a good sax miles to the ferry above Blackford.

'Now Nancy had lived ever since she was a bairn amang the hills, and a nicer Hieland lass you'll no see on a summer day. But she had been in service for a half-year wi' an aunt o' her ain,—her mither's half-sister—wha belonged to Burnness. Her husband had been a merchant-captain, and when he was drowned aff the Skerries on board the *Jolly Brithers* of Largo (which he partly owned), she just stayed on in the little house where he had left her. It stood close to the sea, so that, when the day was warm, Nancy, who was as fond as a fish o' the saut water, could be up to the waist in a jiffy. Weel, she was bathing one day with her cousin, Lisbeth Gordon, when on a sudden she was drawn into a strong current or swirl, and carried aff her feet. Baith girls skirled like scarts; but Lisbeth could not come near her cousin, and so she behoved to

wade to the shore as fast as her fear and the tide and her weet petticoat wud let her. It looked very black for Nancy, for she could not swim, or at least, if she could, the tide was ower strang for her bit legs. However, as it happened, Evan Caird,—he was a ship-carpenter then, a nephew of his dee'd in the kirk town in the spring,—was passing to his work at the time,—perhaps he had been taking a keek at the lasses, laughing and plashing together like twa young seals,—and just as she had risen aboon the water for the last time, he got her under his oxter, and the next minute was swimming briskly to the shore. She was quite white and gash when he laid her on the sand, rubbing her hands and trying to bring her back to her senses; but he thought her, in spite of her blue lips, and the water dreepin' from her yallow hair, the very sweetest angel he had ever seen,—in the Bible or oot of it. He did not get lang to look at her though; for Lisbeth had run to the house, and brought the neighbours. The auld women turned him aff just as Nancy had opened her eyes, and thanked him with a blessed smile,—turned him aff wi' a flea in his lug, as they say, for I reckon that they considered it maist improper for a lad to bring a young lass to the shore, wi' naething on but her petticoat.

'But it would not do; for, though Nancy blushed a bit when she neist met Evan Caird, she kent weel that he had saved her from the fishes; and her heart went out in pure maiden thankfulness to bless and welcome him. He was just the lad to win a girl's fancy—frank, free,

honest, of the blue-eyed, light-haired, light-hearted Scandinavian kind. So it cam' aboot, or ever Nancy returned to Craigdarroch, she had plighted her troth to Evan; and the half of the broken sixpence which she wore neist her heart was the gift of her first lover.

'Duncan Roy, who had lost his wife at little Hetty's birth, was sweir to part with his daughter—his ewe-lamb, he would call her, as he stroked her lang curls. However, like a wise man, he saw that what wud be, maun be; and the upshot was that they were to be married in the hinder end of the year—the same year it was that I first saw Nancy at Lumphanan. Shortly before this time, however, Evan had got a place in the excise, and was now a revenue officer—for, being a smart, serviceable lad, he had been marked out by the inspector at Burnness, and was readily appointed, when a vacancy occurred, to a good and weel-paid post.

'Now, at that time—not very many years after Robbie Burns had been in the excise himself, and ye ken how *he* liked it—the gauger stank in the nostrils of the country-folk. Wherever you fand a mossy burn, you might tak' your Bible oath, a still was not far off. Every man in the Hielands, gentle and simple, was a smuggler by nature or education. In the low country the gaugers had the upper hand. The smugglers had certain well-kent roads, by which they conveyed their brew from the hills to the sea-coast. Thirty or forty Hieland ponies, each wi' twa kegs slung across its back, attended by a score of hill-men, might aften be met on the roads at orra hours, and in outlying-glens; and mony

a fecht took place when the excisemen happened to meet them. But few gaugers ever ventured "aboon the pass." It used to be said that nane, at least, "cam' doon." However that might be, it was certain that the trade of brewing went on briskly, and that few cared to meddle wi' them that brewed. You may believe, consequently, that there was some stir in Lumphanan kirkyard that September Sabbath, when it was seen that Evan Caird, the gauger, had come wi' Nancy. There was a deal of angry whispering and muttering among the lads. The glede fluttered the doos; it was not fair, they thocht, to bring the hawk into the howlet's nest. However, nothing unchancy came of it at the time. Neither Nancy nor Evan noticed what was said. Love is a tyrannical divinity, an absolute monarch; whiles, doubtless, it makes a man scent danger like a whutret, but aftener it steeks his een. They were a handsome couple; and Nancy looked so fond and proud of her joe that it was little wonder the redshanks glowered at the south country lad who had gathered their sweetest flower. 'Deed she was a winsome lass,' quoth the Commodore, kindling at the recollection; 'her breath and her cheeks were just made of roses, you would have thought. And she was active and mettlesome as a kid, —mettlesome wi' youth and health and the pure glow of a maiden and honest love.

'But to return to Donald and myself. Donald had forgathered wi' Duncan Roy at kirk (he was an auld freen' o' Donald's), and had promised to come across in the gloaming to Craigdarroch. The clachan was five

mile down the glen,—so that by lodging for the night wi' Duncan, we would be weel forrit on our return road. Weel, we went round to Donald's gudebrither's for the gun and the eagle and the horns and the ither traps; and syne after dinner we walked down in the cool of the afternoon to Duncan's, where we fand them at supper. Donald had been in ane of his sulky humours ever since he saw Nancy and the gauger together; not a word had he spoken on the road, except answering me wi' a snap, when I spoke to him. However, there was a deal of lauchin' and daffin' at Duncan's (for Evan was a blithe, good-humoured chiel, and Duncan liked his joke), till Duncan got down the big Bible for the Sabbath evening reading; and then we gaed to bed, —for they keepit early hours in the country lang syne, —early to bed and early to rise.

'Now, you maun understand that I was only a bairn at the time—a sturdy loon, doubtless, or I could barely have tramped alongside of Donald. Donald was sent to sleep in the stable-loft among the straw,—for there was only a but and ben, as it's called,—and it was designed that I should sleep wi' Donald; but Nancy said that it was unkind to turn a bit callant like me oot to the rottans; and she made me up a bed in a hole in the wa', aff her ain room, where she and little Hetty slept in one bed. I was quickly tucked into the sheets, for I was tired and stiff; but somehow I could not sleep. It was a sultry night; there was not a breath of wind nor a cloud stirring in the haill sky; there had been a drouth for weeks. I could hear, through the open win-

dow, the blackcock crowing, and the salmon louping at the Black Linn, and whiles a whaup went skirling across the muir. So I tossed and turned till I was sair. At last Nancy cam' ben to her bed; but as she was undressin', Hetty took to greetin', so she got the bairn into her lap, and sang her to sleep wi' a saft Gaelic ballad, for she had a sweet voice. While she was still singing saftly—croonin' half to her ain thochts and half to Hetty—I heard her name whispered outside. I kent it was Evan, for she went and stood beside the window, and they talked together for lang, murmuring the delicious murmurs of early love, and cooin' like a pair of cushey-doos in the wood. Evan had orders to meet his officer at the station next morning, and he had gude thirty miles to travel during the night. They had parted ben the house, but Evan could not leave till he had seen Nancy again. In the end, when they had said "Gude-bye" for the hundredth and last time, they parted for gude, Evan stepping across the muir, and Nancy lookin' after him through the darkness, till, minding where she was, with a little start and flutter (like a teuchit rising from its eggs), and after a short, whispered prayer (for she still said her prayers aloud, as she had been tocht—Nancy had grown a woman, and had a woman's love in her heart, but she kept some o' her bonny bairn-like ways), in which I could hear Evan's name, and a tender supplication that he might be preserved safe from all evil and harm, she slipt into the cosy nest—beside her sleeping sister.'

Here the Commodore paused for a moment, and then resumed.

'I think it must have been about an hour after this that I wakened with a start. I was shivering all over; I had been roused suddenly out of a confused dream, and my wits were scattered. The moon had risen—it was close upon the last quarter—and it threw a ghastly and forlorn light upon the hill-side, and the black clump of willows anent the Linn. I looked up, and there, near the middle of the room, I saw Nancy,—standing, like a ghost, in her white night-gear,—her long yellow hair hanging confusedly down her back. She had turned towards the window, and with one hand had pressed her hair from off her face, as if to let her listen freely. She came towards me—for, wondering and frightened, I had sat up in bed. "That cry—did you hear it?" she said; and she looked at me with a white face, and eyes which were full of a vague fear. "Did you hear that cry? I thocht it was Evan's voice." Then, seeing that I was nearly as scared as herself, she forgot her ain fear, and set herself stoutly to quiet me before she returned to bed. "I must have been dreaming," she said, blushing a bit. "What a goose I am, to be sure!"

'In the end I fell into a sound sleep; and the sun was shining briskly when I opened my eyes. The room was empty, but I heard a voice close to the burn (which joined the Dee fifty yards farther down) singing a blithe nursery sang. I got up, and looked out. At the burn-side I saw Nancy, who was a keen housewife, tramping clothes in a tub, after the fashion of the

country lasses. Hetty, wrapped in a tartan shawl, and basking and crowing in the morning sun, was lying, not far off, among the white pebbles on the bank. It was a quiet, lovely morning; the laverocks were singing in the lift, and all over the hills I heard the bleating of innumerable sheep, for the shepherds were bringing their flocks down to the lower pastures. Donald was not yet visible, so I scampered off to the river, carrying my clothes with me, and getting a smile from Nancy as I passed, and plunged into the clear, deep water. We were born—the Doctor and I—beside the sea, and we took to the water freely: when we were the merest bairns we could dive like ducks. I was half way across the river, when I noticed something black whirling in a swirl. I swam near it, and managed to lay hold of a blue Glengarry bonnet,—as it proved to be. I swam to the shore, and, quickly dressing (for a boy's toilet is quickly made), shouted to Nancy that I had caught a queer fish. She came down to where I sat—a perfect Hebe. Her round arms were bare as well as her white feet and ankles, and she looked so nice and fresh and happy and innocent that even a boy could see that she was, as Mr. Coleridge has said, "beautiful exceedingly." I think it struck me then for the first time; and putting the bonnet behind my back, I said that I would not let her have it till she gave me a kiss. "You saucy bairn!" she said, with a bright, pleasant laugh; and then she stooped down, and, throwing her arms round me, pressed a kiss upon my cheek. It was the last time that Nancy leuch for mony a day; I doubt if ever she

leuch freely again. I held up the cap in boyish triumph; in a single moment her face was as white as death. I shall never forget that look. She shivered all over for a time, and then fell with a sick cry on the ground. I raised her head. "What ails you, Nancy?" I managed to gasp out, for that pale, despairing face had terrified me again, as it had terrified me in the moonlight. "See! see!" she replied, pointing to the front of the cap, but replying more to her own thoughts than to my question; and there, beneath a heather-sprig, I saw the initials "E. C." worked in red worsted. It was Evan's cap. She had worked the letters (so they told me afterwards) on the Saturday night, while Evan sat clashing with Duncan about the Admiral's last great victory. He was clashing wi' Duncan, but his frank, honest blue eyes were fixed on Nancy,—as she weel kent.

'As she could not rise, I was fain to run for help. They were soon about us,—Duncan, Donald, and the rest of them. They carried her hame, and pit her in her ain bed. For mony days she lay like one in a dream,—only at times pressing her hand upon her head with a weary moan that went to the heart. It was better for her, perhaps, that her mind gaed as it did; for she was barely in bed when ane o' the farm-loons spied a bundle, as it seemed, floating among the water-lilies, outside a clump of rashes. He cried to us, and we ran down to the bank. It was the body of Evan Caird—a pitiful sight! The eyes were fixed and staring, the water was dripping out of the lank brown

curls, and there was a bitter scowl upon the brow and about the lips,—as if his last thocht had been of vengeance, and his last word a curse. I had never seen death before; and the destroying angel had made that night a fearful piece of work wi' Evan Caird.

'They thought at the outset that he had fallen by mischance into the Linn; but a word of Nancy's set them upon a different tack. "The Cradle!" she had moaned more than once as they were carrying her to the house. And the rights of the matter, so far, were quickly settled. It was found that the cradle was down. One end of the rope had been frayed by the rock, and had, doubtless, given way when Evan was crossing. He had been thrown into the river, stunned by the fall, and drowned in the rapid tide. That was the story. But auld Fiscal Tamsan tell't me lang afterwards that it was clear to his mind that Evan had not been killed by a chance shot,—he was a murdered man. The rope, he said, had not given way,—*it had been cut.* He examined it next morning, and he saw the marks of the knife. There were lang precognitions, as they ca' them, and twa or three lads were clapped in jail: but there was little evidence, and they could not try them. But the Fiscal did'na doubt that it was the work of the smugglers. They had fancied Evan was upon their track, and learning somehow that he was to cross the river that night, they had waited for him at the cradle. When he was swinging in the darkness, the deevils had run in, and cut the rope.'

The Commodore paused at this point of his narrative to replenish his pipe, and then proceeded.

'Donald and I gat hame neist day. The eagle was stuffed; and there he is yet, as large as life. The rest are a' awa. Duncan lies in the kirkyard at Lumphanan. "But what of Nancy?" you ask. Well, the poor lassie's heart was broken; but, indeed, it's uncommin' difficult to dee of a broken heart,—especially in the Hieland air. She was a changed woman when she rose from her bed; but she lived on. I was with the *Wasp* at Malacca, sax years afterwards, when I heard, in a letter from the Doctor, that my poachin' freen' Donald had married Nancy Roy. A year later I heard that she was dead. It was said that she had gone oot o' her mind, and had—shortly before her confinement—tried to cut her husband's throat one night with his ain razor. At least Donald escaped from the house, his hands bleeding, a gash in his cheek, and a scared look in his face. However that might be, she never recovered her wits, and dee'd in her first confinement. The puir bairn was mercifully taken with its mither: and now Donald himself has left,—the last o' the lot.'

'Did it never occur to you,' Horace inquired, in a meditative tone, after a pause, 'that Donald might have been in some way implicated in Caird's death?'

'Wha ever put such a notion into your head?' retorted the Commodore, sharply. 'No, I had no suspicion,—at least, I never suspected him till the other day. But, shortly before his death, I went into his room. He was muttering uneasily; and though for a

bit I could make little or nothing of what he said, at last I distinctly heard the words "Evan Caird!" followed by a deep sigh or moan, and some Old Testament words, which sounded like a prayer for mercy, in respect of some great evil done or suffered. Then he roused up, and recognised me. He looked so miserable that I said if he had anything upon his mind he should see the minister. But Donald was wild at the notion. "Hoot, na!" he said; "the parsons are empty wind-bags—tinklin' cymbals—not dividing the word of the Lord to edification." Then I said that I hoped, at least, he had repented of any ill he had done. "Wha speaks o' repentin'?" he answered, in a loud voice, his mind beginning to ramble; "I want no repentance. Have we not been chosen or disowned from the creation of the world?" So he died, and made no sign. But when I recollect that Donald, as I have been told, was an early lover of Nancy—rejected for Evan Caird; that it was impossible to ascertain where he might have been during the night when the murder (if it was a murder) was done; that his wife had either heard him confess, or otherwise come to suspect that he had done her a grievous injury, I sometimes fancy that what you say is possible. He may have met his rival on his road to the cradle, and, yielding to a swift, devilish impulse, have hurried him into eternity. He was often sulky, as I have said: but I can mind that the neist day, as we walked down the glen, he never opened his mouth.'

'Nonsense!' I said; 'Donald did not look like a murderer.'

The Commodore paused at this point of his narrative to replenish his pipe, and then proceeded.

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'Did it never occur to you,' Horace inquired, in a meditative tone, after a pause, 'that Donald might have been in some way implicated in Caird's death?'

'Wha ever put such a notion into your head?' retorted the Commodore, sharply. 'No, I had no suspicion,—at least, I never suspected him till the other day. But, shortly before his death, I went into his room. He was muttering uneasily; and though for a

bit I could make little or nothing of what he said, at last I distinctly heard the words "Evan Caird!" followed by a deep sigh or moan, and some Old Testament words, which sounded like a prayer for mercy, in respect of some great evil done or suffered. Then he roused up, and recognised me. He looked so miserable that I said if he had anything upon his mind he should see the minister. But Donald was wild at the notion. "Hoot, na!" he said; "the parsons are empty wind-bags—tinklin' cymbals—not dividing the word of the Lord to edification." Then I said that I hoped, at least, he had repented of any ill he had done. "Wha speaks o' repentin'?" he answered, in a loud voice, his mind beginning to ramble; "I want no repentance. Have we not been chosen or disowned from the creation of the world?" So he died, and made no sign. But when I recollect that Donald, as I have been told, was an early lover of Nancy—rejected for Evan Caird; that it was impossible to ascertain where he might have been during the night when the murder (if it was a murder) was done; that his wife had either heard him confess, or otherwise come to suspect that he had done her a grievous injury, I sometimes fancy that what you say is possible. He may have met his rival on his road to the cradle, and, yielding to a swift, devilish impulse, have hurried him into eternity. He was often sulky, as I have said: but I can mind that the neist day, as we walked down the glen, he never opened his mouth.'

'Nonsense!' I said; 'Donald did not look like a murderer.'

'Why,' responded Horace, from the serene height of a protracted acquaintance with human nature, 'it 's my experience that murderers look very much like other people. We raise an imaginative barrier between the murderer and the rest of the race. But, in truth, there is no brand upon his forehead; and I am not sure that the man who takes his neighbour's life is necessarily worse than the man who takes his neighbour's character. But there is one point in your narrative,' Horace continued, turning to the Commodore, 'which I do not quite follow. Was it possible that the girl could have heard the cry which we may suppose her lover uttered when he was precipitated from the cradle?'

'Well, I don't know: the cradle was not more than a mile and a half, or two miles, from the cottage, and the night was uncommin' quiet. It is barely possible that she may have heard his cry: but I think not. The cry, at least, could not have wakened her. It was another cry, I suspect, audible to the inner ear only,—though connected, perhaps, by some fine law of sympathy—some mysterious and invisible train of association—with the actual peril of her lover.'

Thus the Commodore, not knowing that our latest poet had written, or was to write—

> Star to star vibrates light; may soul to soul
> Strike through a finer element of her own?

XIV.

WHAT WE ALL MADE OF IT.

LIKE causes produce unlike effects,—a philosophical proposition to be deduced, *inter alia*, from the well-worn epigram on the convivial habits of two illustrious statesmen:—

> *Pitt.* 'I cannot see the Speaker, Hal—can you?'
> *Dundas.* 'Not see the Speaker! D—m'e, I see two.'

Many men, I believe, work best in winter; but for me the summer time is the time for work. The frost nips the imagination. It is impossible to write with freedom when the mind is torpid, and the frost-bitten fingers refuse to guide the pen. The polar bear sleeps through the dark months; and I think we might do worse than follow the example he sets us. He awakes in spring, fierce, energetic, lively, amorous, and ready for any quantity of blubber. The idyll must be sung, the essay must be finished, ere the leaves begin to brown; in December, after a sharp walk in search of wild duck and woodcock during the brief daylight, we

will doze indolently over the blazing logs, and dream of Capri.

These early days of winter, however, are not unpleasant. This, indeed, was a charming morning,—the grass was crisp with frost; the sun shone brilliantly; and when I looked out from the window of my bedroom (which is at the very top of the house), I saw that the distant sea was smooth as a mirror, and that the fishers were busy at their work. So (as I had promised Dr. Diamond to make some notes from an old manuscript before the snow kept us permanently within doors) I determined to walk across the sands to 'the Castle.'

Letty had told me that she wanted to sketch the Hawk-head; and when she heard at breakfast where I was going, she undertook to be my companion. She would sketch the rock as I was making my notes, and we should return together in the early twilight. A brief hour's walk through yellow stubbles and woods from which the brown frosted leaves were falling incessantly, brought us to the sea-shore. I left Letty (who had grown very silent and pale for some days past,—where, by the way, was Horace? and was the Hawk-head meant to effect a diversion?) in view of the fantastic cliff which she had come to sketch,—the old Newfoundland—after a vain pursuit of a string of wild-fowl, which rose unexpectedly among the rushes—stretched himself out at her feet. It was a pretty picture, I thought, as I looked back,—one which I should like Mr. Dante Rossetti to paint for me, when he comes to Hazeldean. The fair delicate face, the blue-brown

eyes, the pure brow, the composed lips with their faint smile, the wealth of yellow hair, is one which he alone of all our artists is able to interpret on canvas. Let him place her beside the grey northern sea, or, like his own matchless Aphrodite, amid a thicket of roses and honeysuckle; either will suit that fitful, shifting, April-like loveliness. Her smile brightens the wintriest sky; and the glory of honeysuckle and roses faints before the bloom of life.

The Castle is a sea-girt keep—an imposing and massive pile. The sea washes the windows; the sea buffets the walls; at night, the sea mingles with your dreams. It is the sort of place where you might fall madly in love with the sea, and the sea-creatures; for, in the moonlight, the Mermaid sings her deceitful song, and combs her yellow curls, and you can leap from your bedroom window into her arms, or into the shadowless water at her *feet*,—for at such seasons you do not credit the cold-blooded calumny about her tail.

The nobles who own the keep have mingled their blood with that of their country since the days when the Danes first landed on our island; and in hall and corridor, comely and gallant faces by Gainsborough, and Sir Joshua, and Sir Peter, and Jamieson, and older masters, illustrate the annals of the House. A Royalist house, you may be sure; and ever foremost in battle and council,—whether for a Mary or a Charles,—to vindicate its constant loyalty.

This thick folio—the *Kilmarnock Papers*, it is called —contains one of these loyal episodes; and, as the winter

sun still keeps its place in the heaven, we may linger for a little over a sorrowful record of the violent and unhappy past. The *Kilmarnock Papers* form a most interesting collection. They introduce us to the inner life of a troubled society, bringing us face to face, as it were, with the men of the '45.*

From the series of contemporary prints alone, a sketch of the time might be constructed. There is the Royal Palace of St. Germain-en-Laye, with its straight walks, its fountains, and its trim holly hedges, among which the exiles plotted, and from which is dated (June 29, 1706) the letter which occupies the following page, wherein 'James R.' thanks Lord Erroll for his 'constant and singular fidelity,' and assures him of his kindness, and of 'the desire I have to be in a condition of rewarding you for all your services,'—a desire not to be gratified. There are portraits of those who were engaged in the '15—George Collingwood, Richard Gascoyne, Lord Viscount Kenmure, the Earl of Derwentwater. There are several portraits of Prince Charles Edward—one painted at Rome by Domenico Dupra, with these lines inscribed below:—

> Édouard, presque seul, vole vers ses États,
> Sa fortune et ses droits accompagnent ses pas.
> Quel prince mieux que lui prétend à la couronne,
> Si le sang la transmet, si la vertu la donne?

Another—a lovely boyish face in a highland bonnet—graces a Dutch print of 'Perkins's Triumph.' William,

* Lord Erroll has kindly allowed me to use these papers.

Duke of Cumberland—the coarse heavy mouth and double chin are characteristic—mounted on a black charger, surveys 'the routed rebel army at Culloden;' a dying Highlander, with a broken sword in his hand, lies at 'the Butcher's' feet. There is 'a prospect of y^e^ town of Inverness' at the era of the rebellion, when the south bank of the river only appears to have been built upon; a representation of the march of the Guards towards Scotland in the year 1745, and humbly dedicated by William Hogarth 'to his Majesty the King of Prussia, an encourager of arts and sciences!' 'The Traytor's Coat of Arms,' supported by a Jesuit and a Highlander, and bearing the inscription, 'Pour la Veuve et l'Orphelin,'—a somewhat savage jest. The prints devoted to 'the rebel lords' are numerous. Westminster Hall on the trial of Simon Lord Lovat—original sketches made by Hogarth at the trial, and long in Horace Walpole's possession,—Hogarth's famous caricature of the old Fox himself, 'drawn from the life, and etched in aquafortis,' are among the more curious of these. In 'a perspective view of Tower-hill,' which represents a vast open space, 'the Governor of y^e^ Tower' is delivering the prisoners—Lords Kilmarnock and Balmerino—to the Sheriffs of London at the barrier for execution. A Dutch print of 'the execution of the rebel Lords on Great Tower-hill,' closes the series. An immense assemblage surrounds the scaffold, and crowds the house-tops. Every available spot is occupied. The vast mass is kept in order by guards and soldiers dressed in the old-fashioned military costume which we see in

contemporary prints of Dettingen and Culloden. The scaffold is of wood, fenced by a low railing; two empty coffins are placed upon it; the executioner is in the act of striking the blow. This doggrel is written below:—

> At this Sad Scene which Blood must deeply stain,
> Scarce can the Pitying Eye the Tear restrain;
> But the same instant call to Mental Sight
> These Heroes bleeding in their Country's Right,—
> Intrepid Gardiner, and each brave Monro,
> We check the Grief, and think the Axe too slow:
> One Briton, who for sacred freedom falls,
> For a whole Hetacomb of Rebels calls.

William Boyd, Earl of Kilmarnock, joined Prince Charles after the battle of Preston. His accession occasioned much surprise at the time, for he had been bred in the principles of the Revolution. He had married Lady Ann Livingstone, however (through whom his son subsequently succeeded to the Earldom of Erroll), and it is not improbable that her influence had attached him to a cause to which her family had adhered with 'constant and singular fidelity.'* To her

* James Foster, however, in his *Account of the Behaviour of the late Earl of Kilmarnock*, says: 'And here I cannot help thinking myself bound, in justice to Lady Kilmarnock, to declare that he (Lord Kilmarnock) said to me, though she was bred in different sentiments, that he thought her more inclined to Whiggish than Jacobite principles. And the Rev. and Hon. Mr. Home and Mr. Ross, his lordship's solicitor, desired me to inform the world of another thing which he had expressly mentioned to them, viz., that, instead of exciting him to, she had dissuaded him from, entering into the late wicked and horrid rebellion.'

ladyship's well-timed hospitality, the Prince's victory at Falkirk has been sometimes ascribed. Sir Walter Scott observes:—'General Hawley having felt the influence of the wit and gaiety of the Countess of Kilmarnock (whose husband was in the Prince's army), had been unable to resist her ladyship's invitation to Callander House, and he had resided there from the time of his arrival in Falkirk on the 16th, until the afternoon of the 17th of January, old style, with less attention to the army which he commanded than became an old soldier. In the meantime, rougher cheer was preparing for him than he probably experienced at Callander.' It is alleged, in Kay's *Edinburgh Portraits*, that it was on this occasion that Lord Kilmarnock first joined the Prince. 'On the 17th of January 1746, the day on which the battle of Falkirk was fought, General Hawley was entertained at dinner by the Earl and Countess of Kilmarnock, and the Earl, leaving the dining-room on some slight excuse, put on his military dress, and mounting his horse, left the Countess to do the honours of the table. He left Callander Wood by the *White Yett*, whence a gallop of a few hundred yards brought him to the battle-field.' This narrative, though curiously circumstantial, is inconsistent with the fact that immediately after the battle of Preston, Lord Kilmarnock was appointed to the command of a troop of horse in the rebel army.

Lord Kilmarnock was taken prisoner at Culloden, and was brought to the bar of the House of Lords, along with the Earl of Cromarty and Lord Balmerino, on a

charge of high treason, in July 1746.* John Murray, of Broughton, Charles Edward's secretary, induced by promise of a free pardon, had made a full disclosure to the Government. He saved his life, but it was dearly bought. A well-known epigram embalms in appropriate language the fierce animosity with which the Jacobites continued to regard their old comrade :—

> If heaven is pleased when sinners cease to sin,
> If hell is pleased when sinners enter in,
> If men are pleased at parting with a knave,
> Then all are pleased,—for Murray's in his grave.†

Murray's evidence was not required, however, till a later period; for the rebel lords pleaded guilty, and were, on the 30th of July, after a graceful and touching appeal to his peers from Lord Kilmarnock, sentenced to death.

Lord Kilmarnock, who is represented as a man of a mild and benevolent disposition, bore himself, during the period between his sentence and execution, with fortitude and apparent cheerfulness. Strenuous efforts were made to obtain a reprieve, and illustrious friends interested themselves in his behalf. Among these the

* Among the *Kilmarnock Papers* are the Great Chamberlain's (Lord Ancaster) tickets for the trial of Lord Lovat, and for the trial of the other lords, admitting to his own box. That for the lords simply bears the Chamberlain's coat of arms, his seal, and the motto, *Loyalte me oblige*; but Lord Lovat's is covered with elaborate devices—Cupids and Graces, War and the Arts, printed in red.

† The name of Gilbert Burnet has sometimes been substituted for Murray's.

Duke of Hamilton was conspicuous. Several letters from Lord Kilmarnock to the Duke are among the *Kilmarnock Papers*. On Saturday, August 9, he writes from the Tower:—'My Lord Duke,—Mr. Ross showed me this morning a letter from Lord Boyd, in which he tells me that he had applied to Lord Albemarle for leave to come up to see me before I suffered, but that it was refused him.* I approve much of your Grace's kind proposition of mentioning the refusal in the closet, and requesting that leave may still be granted; which will of consequence produce reprieve, and what may be the good effects of that, nobody knows.' And he concludes:—'The freedom I take in making this proposal to your Grace, is a strong evidence of the great sense I have of the friendship you have shown me, and that I shall always remain, for what time I have to live, your Grace's most obliged and most humble servant, WILLIAM BOYD.' Whether the Duke had mentioned the matter in the closet does not appear; but a curious document which has been preserved shows that he was labouring zealously for his friend.

A pasteboard card—the eight of diamonds—has been split down the middle, and on the inner side of the *back* of the card, these words are written:—

'Duke of Hamilton's compliments to the Countess of Yarmouth. He is very sorry he could not do himself the honour of waiting upon her ladyship this morning, as he intended. His Grace has only this moment come

* Lord Boyd, the Earl of Kilmarnock's eldest son, held a commission in the royal army.

to town, being kept upon the road by an overturn. His Grace begs to have the honour of now waiting upon her ladyship at any hour that may be most convenient.'

The two sides of the card being again joined, it is forwarded to Lady Yarmouth, and to the request which it contains, her ladyship politely but coldly replies in French, 'that she will always be glad to see the D. of H. at her house. But she begs to assure him that she cannot be of any service to him with regard to the subject which procures her that honour.'

This effort made (it may be presumed from the secrecy observed) after Lord Cromarty's reprieve had been granted, and when the Court had refused to listen to any further solicitations, was probably the last. On Monday, August 11, the warrant for Lord Kilmarnock's execution was brought to the Tower, and he prepared to die. The Hon. and Rev. Alex. Home, writing to the Duke on the morning of the Saturday previous to the execution, says, 'I give you the joy to know that the beauty of his behaviour in losing all hope of life, appeared to me something more than human;' and on the Sunday, he adds, 'I was with our unfortunate friend several hours yesterday. His behaviour continues calm and resolute, which I am convinced he will support to the last. Be pleased to send the sketch of his letter to Lord Boyd; he called anxiously for it yesterday.'

The letter to Lord Boyd, dated the day before the execution, commences thus:—'Dear Boyd,—You may easily believe that it gave me a great deal of uneasiness that you did not get leave to come up here, and that I

could not have the pleasure of taking a long and last farewell of you. Besides the pleasure of seeing you, and giving you the blessing of a dying father, I wanted to have talked to you about your affairs more than I have strength or spirits to write.' He then proceeds to counsel him at some length, recommending him to 'continue in your loyalty to his present Majesty, and the succession to the Crown by law established;' and he concludes,—'I must again recommend to you your unhappy mother; comfort her, and take all the care you can of your brothers. And may God of his infinite mercy preserve, guide, and conduct you through all the vicissitudes of this life, and after it bring you to the habitations of the just, and make you happy in the enjoyment of Himself to eternity, is the sincere prayer of your affectionate father, WILLIAM BOYD.'

A brief pamphlet,* published soon after the execution, by the Rev. James Foster, who attended Lord Kilmarnock in the Tower, supplies a touching picture of the closing scene:—

'I now come to the conclusion of this dismal scene—his behaviour on the day of his execution. I attended him in the morning about eight o'clock, and found him in a most calm and happy temper, without any disturbance or confusion in his mind, and with apparent marks of ease and serenity in his aspect. . . . He continued all the morning of his execution in the same uniform

* *An Account of the Behaviour of the late Earl of Kilmarnock, after his Sentence, and on the Day of his Execution.* By James Foster. London: Printed for J. Noon. 1746.

temper, unruffled, and without any sudden vicissitudes and starts of passion. This remarkably appeared, when soon after I had, at his own desire, made a short prayer with him, General Williamson came to inform him that the sheriffs waited for the prisoner ; for, at receiving this awful summons to go to death, he was not in the least startled, but said calmly and gracefully, " General, I am ready ; I'll follow you." At the foot of the first stairs he met and embraced Lord Balmerino, who greatly said to him, " My lord, I'm heartily sorry to have your company in this expedition." From thence he walked with the usual formalities to the Tower gate, and, after being delivered into the custody of the sheriffs, to the house provided on Tower-hill, with a serenity, mildness, and dignity, that greatly surprised and affected the spectators. . . . After this, Lord Balmerino took his leave, embracing Lord Kilmarnock with the same kind of noble and generous compliment as he had used before, but in words somewhat different: " My dear Lord Kilmarnock, I am only sorry that I cannot pay all this reckoning alone ; once more, farewell for ever." . . As he was stepping on to the scaffold, notwithstanding the great pains he had taken to familiarise the outward apparatus of death to his mind, nature still recurred upon him ; so that being struck with such a variety of dreadful objects at once—the multitude, the block, his coffin, the executioner, the instrument of death—he turned about, and said, " Home, this is terrible." This expression, so suitable to the occasion, was far from being a mark of unmanly fear, being pronounced with

a steady countenance, and firmness of voice, indicative of a mind unbroken, and not disconcerted. . . . My lord's hair having been dressed in a bag, it took some time to undo it, and put it up in his cap. The tucking his shirt under the waistcoat, that it might not obstruct the blow, was the occasion of some further small delay. . . . Having then fixed his neck on the block, he gave the signal; his body remained without the least motion, except what was given it by the stroke of death, which he received full, and was thereby happily eased at once of all his pain.'

These Scottish Royalists—whose loyalty, in the words of King James, was so 'constant and singular,'—

> True as the dial to the sun,
> Although it be not shin'd upon,—

were undoubtedly remarkable men. In their ranks we find great soldiers and great statesmen.

A partisan historian has recently challenged this verdict, and has done his best to cast down the idol which a narrow and exclusive patriotism had raised up.

I cannot think—for my part—that these men have been overrated. If I am pressed for a particular answer, I point to Claverhouse and Montrose. It is true that they had only a provincial stage; but we see what they made of it! It is impossible, I think, to read the records of a single year without discovering that Montrose (of Claverhouse I have already spoken) was a born soldier, and that on a larger stage he would

have won a place beside the great captains of history. Let us look for a moment at what he did.

It is difficult, indeed, to keep pace with Montrose through his brief and brilliant campaign; his marches are so swift and silent, his victories so rapid and dazzling. He has vowed to bring Scotland back to King Charles, and he begins the enterprise with a single trooper. Beset on every side, he turns, and doubles, and beats back, and then, when least looked for, falls upon his prey with a hawk-like swoop. He routs the puffy burghers of Perth at Tippermuir; a day or two thereafter he enters the good town of Aberdeen; then, having enticed Argyle to the Spey, he plunges, amid the woods of Badenoch, into Cimmerian darkness, as Mr. Carlyle would say. He is gaining time—time to marshal the forces of the Royalists, who are everywhere scattered and disheartened, and to make victory, though marvellous, not a miracle. So he reappears in Athole; reappears in Aberdeen; seats himself with consummate skill and coolness among the woods of Fyvie, where the covenanting armies surge against him in vain. But the Gordons are sulky and will not rise; it is lost time to wait longer in Buchan; so, shaking his unwieldy enemy easily off, he once more, in the dead of winter, startles, with the tread of armed men, the eyries of Badenoch, and the barren wilderness of the Spey.

That autumn and winter were certainly not propitious to the Puritans. At no time was a favourable response to Principal Baillie's petition that 'the Almighty might be pleased to *blink* in mercy upon Scotland,' more

urgently needed. What between the Papistical Highlanders of 'James Graham, sometime Marquis of Montrose,' and the great storm of snow which then covered the country, the members of the northern Presbyteries are sorely beset.* But worse fortune is in store for their leaders. Argyle, much perplexed in mind by the unaccountable eccentricities of this will-o'-

* Here are a few extracts from the Minutes of the Presbytery of Strathbogie, during the period in question :—

'1644, 29 May. The Marquis of Huntley, Irvine of Drum, and Gordon of Haddo, excommunicated for their rebellious conspiracy and insurrection against this kirk and kingdom.'

'1644, 12 June. Excommunication of the Earl of Montros and others, for their rebellious invading of their native kingdom with all hostility.'

'1644, 25 Sept. The said day no doctrine, in respect the exercecser was abstracted through the troubles of the time, and for fear of Irish armie was obliged to leave their houses.'

'1645, 18 Feb. No meeting, because of the enemy was for the time within the bounds of the presbytery, so that the brethren could not safely convene together.'

'1645, 5 March. No meeting for the reason foresaid; and, besides, the whole brethren were forced to flee from their houses.'

'1646. There could be no meeting in February by reason of the great storm; nor hitherto in March, by reason of continowale armies and parties of Highlanders remaining within the bounds of the presbytery.'

Next year all those who had been engaged in the rebellion are required to sign and acknowledge in sackcloth, 'to the shedding of the blood of the Lord's people;' and in the cases of church discipline, which occur for some time thereafter, the frail delinquents commonly attribute their misfortunes to 'the soldiers of James Grahame, his army,' who seem to have been somewhat rough wooers.

the-wisp enemy, is on his way to Perth, when he learns that his rival is on his trail. Seized with sudden panic, he precipitately disbands his army, and makes for the metropolis. Even there, however, he does not feel that he is safe; so rendering up his commission to the rebel government, he flies to his inaccessible stronghold on Loch Fyne. 'It's a far cry to Lochow,' and Gillespie Grumach may at length breathe freely; for his antagonist, wiry and virulent though he be, cannot follow him here. But he does not know his man yet. Montrose is inexorable. Through the wildest passes, in the bleak December storms,—and it is a bitter winter,—he forces his way; and on the hill-side over against his own castle, Argyle again beholds the camp-fires of his foe. Craven always, and now sick with terror, he flies shamefully, and leaves the ruthless hunter to harry his lair.

Having sacked the country of the Campbells, Montrose plunges into Lochaber, and prepares to winter upon the desolate shores of Loch Ness. This is the critical moment, the turning-point, in the campaign. He is deserted by a large portion of his men, and on all sides surrounded by the enemy. Seaforth is in the North, at Inverness; Baillie at Perth; Argyle, recovering from his panic, raises his clan, and writes to his friends in Edinburgh that he has 'overtook the rogues at Lochaber.' A daring blow is required. Montrose doubles back; leads his men right across the precipitous spurs of Ben Nevis; and with startling suddenness, closes in on MacCallum More and his men, who are

camped round their Castle of Inverlochy, on the shore of Loch Eil. Argyle again, like a hunted stag, takes to the water, but he cannot carry his army with him; and Auchinleck, 'a stout soldier, but a very vicious man,' as his covenanting allies describe him, is left in command. The winter morning dawns, still, clear, and frosty; the Campbells can hear distinctly the flourish of trumpets that salutes the royal standard on the mountain, and the wild war tune of the Camerons, as they quit their cover—'Come to me, and I will give you flesh,'—a fierce challenge, that day amply redeemed. It was a splendid charge; a handful upon a host; the nearest thing in modern warfare to be compared with it is Charles Napier's charge at Meeanee.

Inverlochy was the most decisive of Montrose's victories—the Campbells being literally driven into the sea—and its effect was instantaneous. The prestige of Argyle is destroyed. The Gordon cavalry, headed by the noblest gentleman of their race, join the royal standard. The army of the northern rebels—a rope of sand, at the best, we may believe,—melts away in a night. Montrose marches through Aberdeenshire and Moray into the Mearns without seeing a foe. Neither Baillie nor Hurry will fight, and the Graham, in his rapid masterly way, pushes past them to sack Dundee; from which town he effects a still more rapid and masterly retreat upon Glen Esk. The hills form a citadel where he knows that he is safe. These forlorn regions are his *dépôts*. The Lowland cavalry dare not follow him through the passes. Thenceforward, for

weeks and months, he becomes obscure, impalpable, veiled in darkness, a sort of terrible myth. Rumours may reach the covenanting generals from Athole, from Loch Katrine, from Ben Lomond—not to be relied on, however, for the Puritan spies are baffled and at fault. So Hurry marches towards Inverness, to join the Northmen, who are again in the field; but Montrose is forthwith upon his trail, and at Alderne, in a stiff and well-contested fight, the veteran army perishes. Baillie, advancing cautiously along the southern bank of the Spey, keeps the royal force in sight for several days, till the Marquis again eludes him, and the scent is lost among the woods of Abernethy. At length, at Alford, in Strathdon, the two generals finally encounter, and though young Lord Gordon is slain—a heavy and disastrous blow—Baillie is utterly routed. Of all the covenanting armies, only one now remains to be dealt with; and, among the thickets of Kilsyth, Montrose wins his last, perhaps his most memorable victory. He has kept his word. From Inverness to the Border the royal authority is re-established, he has brought back Scotland to the King.

To do what Montrose did, to win successive victories over seven or eight trained armies, each of them superior in numbers, discipline, and organisation to that which he led, must be counted no small achievement: but the peculiar difficulty which he had to meet, and which a really great man only could have met with success, resulted from the peculiar constitution of his own force. The Highlander was brave, and he liked fighting. But

he liked plunder better, and he liked to secure his plunder. So that the General was placed in a curious dilemma. Whenever he gained a battle, he lost his army. The victor, in the hour of victory, was left at the mercy of the vanquished. It is assuredly not the least remarkable fact in Montrose's career, that he contrived to secure permanent and enduring results; in effect, to subdue and pacify the whole of Scotland; with an army that continually melted away, and to which victory was in truth more fatal than defeat. Any energetic Celtic robber could issue from the passes, harry the plain, rive the black cattle of his Lowland neighbours, and then retire swiftly with the spoil to his mountain lair. He could do this; it was all that he could do. Montrose, by the felicity and daring of his genius, contrived to make these fickle and fitful elements work out a great scheme of national liberation. For, though the body dissolved like the snow, the spirit, the *man*, remained—a man who acted as a magnet, who drew soldiers out of every valley through which he passed, at whose cry the Redshanks gathered together from their remotest hills. Such a man was a centre, a nucleus, a rallying-point; and so long as their dreaded enemy lived—even after, on his way to England, he had been worsted by a foreign army—the rebel government knew that its supremacy in Scotland was not assured.

One sometimes wishes that Montrose had died in battle, wrapt, it may be, in the flag he had kept so bravely. But it was better not. A stormy death on the battle-field was fitter for Dundee. Montrose's was

a well-balanced character; his life also was well balanced. But it needed the last scene to perfect it. The death gives it a beautiful lyric completeness which most lives, however striking in their separate incidents, want. 'Tis a noble poem from beginning to end, breaking into a solemn dirge and wail of funeral music at the close.

'SO much,' I said, 'for the Cavaliers.' And then folding up the notes which I had made, I walked rapidly along the sands to the bight where I had left Letty with her sketch-book and the Newfoundland.

Letty still sat almost on the spot where I had left her. That slight, charming, exquisite figure could not be mistaken. I saw her first; her hands were folded upon her lap, her hat had been thrown aside, and the sea-breeze played with her curls. The Newfoundland looked gravely into his mistress's face. She started when she noticed me; her air was wistful and embarrassed; and I fancied (though it might be fancy only) that some of the light had died out of her eyes. 'Horace has been here,' she said, slowly and hesitatingly, 'and he has—gone.' She did not say more: but I knew that our little pastoral had come to the end which I had foreseen, and that the lovers had parted.

'OUR BELL WILL GET HIM YET!'

This was Lady Grisel's conclusion when she heard, somehow, of the scene I have just described.

What then?

I have no doubt that Horace is fairly happy, if not supremely blest. Yet sometimes, it may be, that subtle haunting charm of face and voice and presence steals across his memory. He wonders, in idle moods, whether the sea, with its passion and its mystery, be not better, in very truth, than the fertile but somewhat flat piece of *terra firma*, where he has set up his household gods. Fertile,—for Bell, we know, obeys the Divine injunction, and is fruitful and multiplies and replenishes the earth. This may be, I say; yet I do not think that he repines. Had he a few drops of our gipsy blood in his veins it would be different; but Horace is not a Bohemian. The patient Penelope does all his bidding; and he has long ago forgotten whatever took place in that magical solitude,—

> Where Circe weaves her great web year by year,
> So shining, slender, and instinct with grace,
> As weave the daughters of Immortal race.

THE END.

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